BULFINCH'S AGE OF CHIVALRY

OR

KING ARTHUR

AND

HIS KNIGHTS

REVISED BY

REV. J. LOUGHRAN SCOTT

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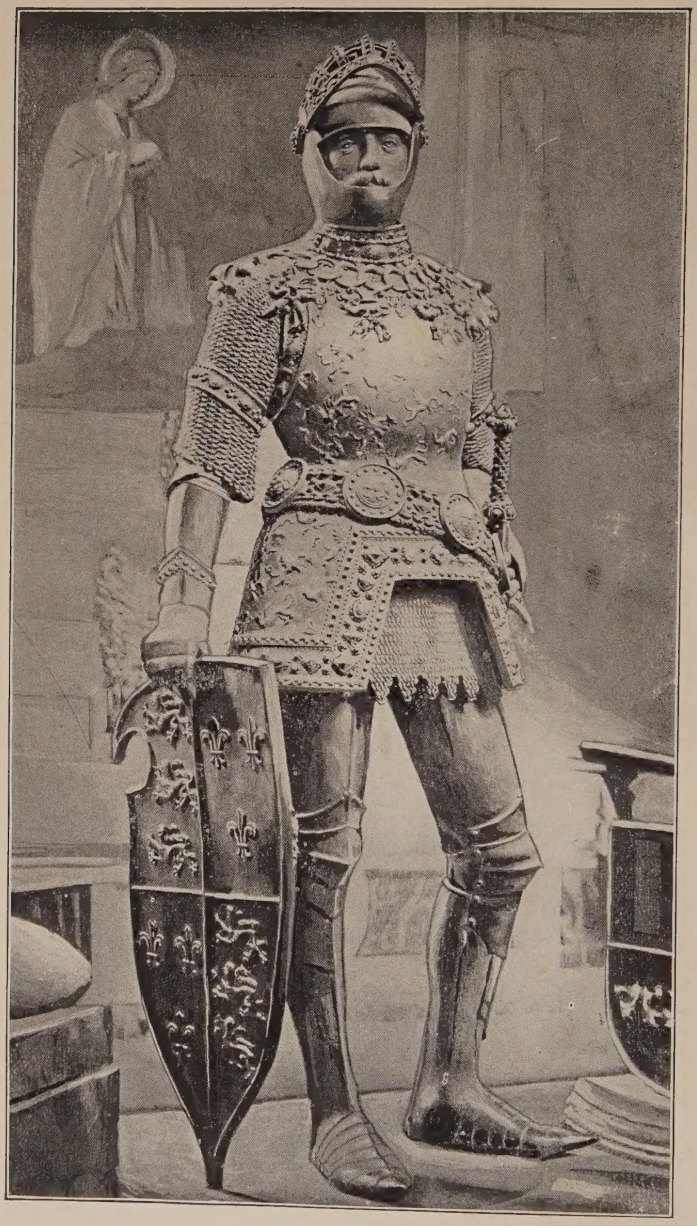

A Knight of King Arthur's Court.

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AGE OF CHIVALRY

OR

KING ARTHUR AND HIS KNIGHTS

BY

THOMAS BULFINCH

A NEW, REVISED AND ENLARGED EDITION

EDITED BY

REV. J. LOUGHRAN SCOTT, D.D.

"Throngs of knights and barons bold,
In weeds of peace high triumphs hold,
With store of ladies, whose bright eyes
Rain influence and judge the prize."
MILTON.

WITH TWENTY-THREE FULL-PAGE PLATES AND NUMEROUS ILLUSTRATIONS IN THE TEXT

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TO

TRUMAN J. BACKUS, LL.D.,

PRESIDENT OF

THE PACKER COLLEGIATE INSTITUTE,

BROOKLYN, N. Y.,

"A SELFLESS MAN AND STAINLESS GENTLEMAN,"

THE WINE OF WHOSE FRIENDSHIP

I FIRST TASTED MANY YEARS AGO.

THE EDITOR.

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EDITOR'S PREFACE.

Two years ago, at the instance of Mr. McKay, the publisher, we edited a revised edition of Bulfinch's "Age of Fable." The "Age of Chivalry" may be regarded as a companion-piece to that work. As a people we have never fully appreciated our mythology or national legends. Greece and Rome have received their proper attention, but few altars have been erected to the unknown gods of our early history. The Druidical age is too indefinite to admit of much save the conjectural, but the one immediately following is replete with traditional interest. The Roman invasion was one of conquest; still it made way for Christianity. The age of Chivalry that immediately followed anticipated the Crusades by hundreds of years. It was an effort to enroll Mars among the saints. Chivalry was but another form of primitive Christianity. King Arthur becomes the centre of British traditions. He is the embodiment of those higher qualities that marked the ambition of the people; Merlin was the seer and Taliesin the Psalmist of that mystic age. The actual existence of an Arthur scarcely admits of a reasonable question. This is evident for the following reasons: "The general tradition, which is too widespread to be altogether an invention; the existence of so many places in Southwestern England and Southern Scotland that bear his name; the fact that history records certain great Teutonic invasions at the very time and in those parts of Britain where he is said to have lived; the persistent local traditions in Somersetshire and Devonshire, England, where even to-day the Arthurian legends are common among the peasants; the testimony of those ancient historical writers who lived too near the time and scenes to have been altogether deceived."[1]

These strange traditions for centuries lay in the sarcophagus of a dead language. The translation of the Mabinogeon marks an

[1] W. H. Roberts, D D.

era in the literary world. But to Geoffry of Monmouth, who lived in the twelfth century, we are indebted, more than to all others, for unearthing this mine of literary interest. To that spring went Sir Thomas Mallory three centuries later; and, following him, Hollinshed, Shakespeare and Sir Walter Scott. Sir Thomas Mallory was the biographer not only of a man but an age. The real Arthur was a man; the ideal was a descendant of the gods. He is the Ulysses of our Epic. Where there is no history the people create it; so the name of Arthur became a page on which the people wrote their traditions. But an epic without a Homer is a harp without strings. Chaucer, Spenser and Shakespeare did much to create an interest in our early traditions, but Tennyson is the real Homer of British literature. His "Idylls of the King" added another sovereign to the line of British monarchs. This we have sought to recognize by the most frequent quotations. The first edition of the "Age of Chivalry" was a splendid framework, without the embellishments of the poets. It lacked the touch of our modern Homer. Not only Tennyson, but Scott, Dryden, Matthew Arnold, Swinburne, Lowell, Bulwer, Schiller, Mrs. Browning and Miller, all have contributed their genius to these stories of chivalry and song. No one can read this edition of the "Age of Chivalry" without coming in contact with the best literature on the Arthurian legends. While retaining the old at the same time we have created a new work. The interest of these legends naturally centres about King Arthur and Queen Guinevere. In the case of Guinevere we have added a new section, and also enlarged the chapter that treats of Arthur and the passing of his kingdom. The names ranking next in interest are those of Launcelot and Elaine; here, too, we have written an additional section. At the close of the first part we have inserted a chapter on Mediæval Legends. St. George and Robin Hood attach to an importance scarcely surpassed by King Arthur himself. We have also drawn directly from Sir Thomas Mallory, especially in connection with the adventures of Sir Tor, Sir Pellenore, Sir Gawain, Sir Launcelot and Sir Galahad.

The close affinity between the original language of the Mabinogeon and the ancient Gaelic has induced us to add a Third Part, with seven additional Chapters, consisting largely of the writings of Ossian. Whatever may have been the origin of those strange

books, they certainly embody more of the ancient spirit of Britain than any other similar work.

The peculiar fascination which the first edition ever had for youthful readers we hope to have preserved. The word Mabinogeon means "boys' stories." To ignore this fact would be to sin against the very life of legendary history; at the same time, the "Age of Chivalry," from its classic associations, is worthy a place in any library.

Our illustrations are intended to beautify the pages, and also interpret their spirit. They have been prepared with great care, and we trust will gratefully serve their purpose. Beneath every myth lies a needful sentiment. Legends are but an ordinary garment with which Truth is often pleased to clothe herself. King Arthur is more than a shadow. His name is carved upon the corner-stone of our civilization, and the "Age of Chivalry" is only limited by the age of man.

J. Loughran Scott.

The Macdowell Church,
Philadelphia, September, 1900.

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KING ARTHUR AND HIS KNIGHTS.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

On the decline of the Roman power, about five centuries after Christ, the countries of Northern Europe were left almost destitute of a national government. Numerous chiefs, more or less powerful, held local sway, as far as each could enforce his dominion, and occasionally those chiefs would unite for a common object; but, in ordinary times, they were much more likely to be found in hostility to one another.

> "For when the Roman left us, and their law
> Relax'd its hold upon us, and the ways
> Were fill'd with rapine, here and there a deed
> Of prowess done redress'd a random wrong."
>
> —GUINEVERE.

In such a state of things, the rights of the humbler classes of society were at the mercy of every assailant; and it is plain that, without some check upon the lawless power of the chiefs, society

must have relapsed into barbarism. Such checks were found, first, in the rivalry of the chiefs themselves, whose mutual jealousy made them restraints upon one another; secondly, in the influence of the Church, which, by every motive, pure or selfish, was pledged to interpose for the protection of the weak; and lastly, in the generosity and sense of right which, however crushed under the weight of passion and selfishness, dwell naturally in the heart of man. From this last source sprang Chivalry, which framed an ideal of the heroic character, combining invincible strength and valor, justice, modesty, loyalty to superiors, courtesy to equals, compassion to weakness, and devotedness to the Church; an ideal which, if never met with in real life, was acknowledged by all as the highest model for emulation.

The word Chivalry is derived from the French *cheval*, a horse. The word knight, which originally meant boy or servant, was particularly applied to a young man after he was admitted to the privilege of bearing arms. This privilege was conferred on youths of family and fortune only, for the mass of the people were not furnished with arms. The knight then was a mounted warrior, a man of rank, or in the service and maintenance of some man of rank, generally possessing some independent means of support, but often relying mainly on the gratitude of those whom he served for the supply of his wants.

In time of war the knight was, with his followers, in the camp of his sovereign, or commanding in the field. In time of peace he was often in attendance at his sovereign's court, gracing with his presence the banquets and tournaments with which princes cheered their leisure. Or he was traversing the country in quest of adventure, professedly bent on redressing wrongs and enforcing rights, sometimes in fulfilment of some vow of religion or of love. These wandering knights were called knights-errant; they were welcome guests in the castles of the nobility, for their presence enlivened the dullness of those secluded abodes, and they were received with honor at the abbeys, which often owed the best part of their revenues to the patronage of the knights; but if no castle or abbey or hermitage were at hand, their hardy habits made it not intolerable to them to lie down, supperless, at the foot of some wayside cross, and pass the night.

It is evident that the justice administered by such an instru-

mentality must have been of the rudest description. The force whose legitimate purpose was to redress wrongs might easily be perverted to inflict them. Accordingly, we find in the romances, which, however fabulous in facts, are true as pictures of manners, that a knightly castle was often a terror to the surrounding country; that its dungeons were full of oppressed knights and ladies, waiting for some champion to appear to set them free, or to be ransomed with money; that hosts of idle retainers were ever at hand to enforce their lord's behests, regardless of law and justice; and that the rights of the unarmed multitude were of no account. This contrariety of fact and theory in regard to chivalry will account for the opposite impressions which exist in men's minds respecting it. While it has been the theme of the most fervid eulogium on the one part, it has been as eagerly denounced on the other.

The Training of a Knight.

The preparatory education of candidates for knighthood was long and arduous. At seven years of age the noble children were removed from their father's house to the court or castle of their future patron, and placed under the care of a governor, who taught them the first articles of religion, and respect and reverence for their lords and superiors, and initiated them in the ceremonies of a court. They were called pages, valets or varlets, and their office was to carve, to wait at table, and to perform other menial services, which were not then considered humiliating. In their leisure hours they learned to dance and play on the harp, were instructed in the mysteries of woods and rivers, that is, in hunting, falconry and fishing, and in wrestling, tilting with spears, and performing other military exercises on horseback. At fourteen the page became an esquire, and began a course of severer and more laborious exercises. To vault on a horse in heavy armor; to run, to scale walls, to wrestle, to wield the battle-axe, were necessary preliminaries to the reception of knighthood, which was usually conferred at twenty-one years of age, when the young man's education was supposed to be completed. In the meantime, the esquires were no less assiduously engaged in acquiring all those refinements of civility which formed what was in that age called courtesy. The same castle in which they received their education was usually thronged with

young persons of the other sex, and the page was encouraged, at a very early age, to select some lady of the court as the mistress of his heart, to whom he was taught to refer all his sentiments, words, and actions. The service of his mistress was the glory and occupation of a knight, and her smiles, bestowed at once by affection and gratitude, were held out as the recompense of his valor. Religion united its influence with those of loyalty and love, and the order of knighthood, endowed with all the sanctity and religious awe that attended the priesthood, became an object of ambition to the greatest sovereigns.

The ceremonies of initiation were peculiarly solemn. After undergoing a severe fast, and spending whole nights in prayer, the candidate confessed, and received the sacrament. He then clothed himself in snow-white garments, and repaired to the church, or the hall, where the ceremony was to take place, bearing a knightly sword suspended from his neck, which the officiating priest took and blessed, and then returned to him. The candidate then, with folded arms, knelt before the presiding knight, who, after some questions about his motives and purposes in requesting admission, administered to him the oaths, and granted his request. Some of the knights present, sometimes even ladies and damsels, handed to him in succession the spurs, the coat of mail, the hauberk, the armlet and gauntlet, and lastly he girded on the sword. He then knelt again before the president, who, rising from his seat, gave him the "accolade," which consisted of three strokes, with the flat of a sword, on the shoulder or neck of the candidate, accompanied by the words:

> "In the name of God, St. Michael and St. George,
> I make thee a knight. Be courteous, valiant
> And loyal."

Then he received his helmet, his shield and spear; and thus the investiture ended.

Freemen, Villains, Serfs, and Clerks.

The other classes of which society was composed were, first, freemen, owners of small portions of land, independent, though they sometimes voluntarily became the vassals of their more opulent neighbors, whose power was necessary for their protec-

tion. The other two classes, which were much the most numerous, were either serfs or villains, both of which were slaves.

The serfs were in the lowest state of slavery. All the fruits of their labor belonged to the master whose lands they tilled, and by whom they were fed and clothed.

The villains were less degraded. Like the serfs, they were attached to the soil, and were transferred with it by purchase; but they paid only a fixed rent to the landlord, and had a right to dispose of any surplus that might arise from their industry.

The term clerk was of very extensive import. It comprehended, originally, such persons only as belonged to the clergy, or clerical order, among whom, however, might be found a multitude of married persons, artisans or others. But in process of time a much wider rule was established; every one that could read being accounted a clerk, or *clericus*, and allowed the "benefit of clergy," that is, exemption from capital and some other forms of punishment, in case of crime.

Tournaments.

The splendid pageant of a tournament between knights, its gaudy accessories and trappings, and its chivalrous regulations, originated in France. Tournaments were repeatedly condemned by the Church, probably on account of the quarrels they led to, and the often fatal results. The "joust," or "just," was different from the tournament. In these, knights fought with their lances, and their object was to unhorse their antagonists; while the tournaments were intended for a display of skill and address in evolutions, and with various weapons, and greater courtesy was observed in the regulations. By these it was forbidden to wound the horse, or to use the point of the sword, or to strike a knight after he had raised his visor or unlaced his helmet. The ladies encouraged their knights in these exercises; they bestowed prizes, and the conqueror's feats were the theme of romance and song. The stands overlooking the ground, or course, were varied in the shapes of towers, terraces, galleries and pensile gardens, magnificently decorated with tapestry, pavilions, and banners. Every combatant proclaimed the name of the lady whose servant *d'amour* he was. He was wont to look up to the stand, and strengthen his courage by the sight of the bright eyes that were

raining their influence on him from above. The knights also carried "favors," consisting of scarfs, veils, sleeves, bracelets, clasps,—in short, some pieces of female habiliment,—attached to their helmets, shields, or armor. If, during the combat, any of these appendages were dropped or lost, the fair donor would at times send her knight new ones, especially if pleased with his exertions.

Mail Armor.

Mail armor, of which the hauberk is a species, and which derived its name from *maille*, a French word for mesh, was of two kinds, plate or scale mail, and chain mail. It was originally used for the protection of the body only, reaching no lower than the knees. It was shaped like a carter's frock, and bound round the waist by a girdle. Gloves and hose of mail were afterwards added, and a hood, which, when necessary, was drawn over the head, leaving the face alone uncovered.

The hauberk was a complete covering of double chain mail. Some hauberks opened before, like a modern coat; others were closed like a shirt.

The chain mail of which they were composed was formed by a number of iron links, each link having others inserted into it, the whole exhibiting a kind of network, of which the meshes were circular, with each link separately riveted.

The hauberk was proof against the most violent blow of a sword; but the point of a lance might pass through the meshes, or drive the iron into the flesh. To guard against this, a thick and well-stuffed doublet was worn underneath, under which was commonly added an iron breastplate. Hence the expression "to pierce both plate and mail," so common in the earlier poets.

Mail armor continued in general use till about the fourteenth century, when it was gradually supplanted by plate armor, or suits consisting of pieces or plates of solid iron, adapted to the different parts of the body.

Shields were generally made of wood, covered with leather, or some similar substance.

Helmets.

The helmet was composed of two parts, the headpiece and the visor, which, as the name implies, was a sort of grating to see

through. Some helmets had a further improvement called a bever, from the Italian *bevere*, to drink. The ventayle, or air-passage, is another name for this.

To secure the helmet from the possibility of falling, or of being struck off, it was tied by several laces to the meshes of the hauberk; consequently, when a knight was overthrown, it was necessary to undo these laces before he could be put to death.

Romances.

In ages when there were no books, and princes themselves could not read, history or tradition was monopolized by the story-tellers. They inherited, generation after generation, the wondrous tales of their predecessors, which they retailed to the public with such additions of their own as their acquired information supplied them with. Anachronisms became of course very common, and errors of geography, of locality, of manners, equally so. Spurious genealogies were invented, in which Arthur and his knights, and Charlemagne and his paladins, were made to derive their descent from Æneas, Hector, or some other of the Trojan heroes.

With regard to the derivation of the word Romance, we trace it to the fact that the dialects which were formed in Western Europe, from the admixture of Latin with the native languages, took the name of *Langue Romaine*. The French language was divided into two dialects. The river Loire was their common boundary. In the provinces to the south of that river the affirmative, yes, was expressed by the word *oc;* in the north it was called *oil* (*oui*); and hence Dante has named the southern language *langue d'oc*, and the northern *langue d'oil*. The latter, which was carried into England by the Normans, and is the origin of the present French, may be called the French Romane; and the former the Provençal, or Provencial Romane, because it was spoken by the people of Provence and Languedoc, southern provinces of France.

These dialects were soon distinguished by very opposite characters. A soft and enervating climate, a spirit of commerce encouraged by an easy communication with other maritime nations, the influx of wealth, and a more settled government, may have tended to polish and soften the diction of the Pro-

vencials, whose poets, under the name of Troubadours, were the masters of the Italians, and particularly of Petrarch. Their favorite pieces were *Sirventes* (satirical pieces), love-songs and *Tensons*, which last were a sort of dialogue in verse between two poets, who questioned each other on some refined points of love's casuistry. It seems the Provencials were so completely absorbed in these delicate questions as to neglect and despise the composition of fabulous histories of adventure and knighthood, which they left in a great measure to the poets of the northern part of the kingdom, called Trouveurs.

At a time when chivalry excited universal admiration, and when all the efforts of that chivalry were directed against the enemies of religion, it was natural that literature should receive the same impulse, and that history and fable should be ransacked to furnish examples of courage and piety that might excite increased emulation. Arthur and Charlemagne were the two heroes selected for this purpose. Arthur's pretensions were that he was a brave, though not always a successful warrior; he had withstood with great resolution the arms of the infidels, that is to say of the Saxons, and his memory was held in the highest estimation by his countrymen, the Britons, who carried with them into Wales, and into the kindred country of Armorica, or Brittany, the memory of his exploits, which their national vanity exaggerated, till the little prince of the Silures (South Wales) was magnified into the conqueror of England, of Gaul, and of the greater part of Europe. His genealogy was gradually carried up to an imaginary Brutus, and to the period of the Trojan war, and a sort of chronicle was composed in the Welsh or Armorican language, which, under the pompous title of the History of the Kings of Britain, was translated into Latin by Geoffrey of Monmouth, in the twelfth century. The Welsh critics consider the material of the work to have been an older history, written by St. Talian, Bishop of St. Asaph, in the seventh century.

As to Charlemagne, though his real merits were sufficient to secure his immortality, it was impossible that his holy wars against the Saracens should not become a favorite topic for fiction. Accordingly, the fabulous history of these wars was written, probably towards the close of the eleventh century, by a monk, who, thinking it would add dignity to his work to em-

bellish it with a contemporary name, boldly ascribed it to Turpin, who was Archbishop of Rheims.

These fabulous chronicles were for a while imprisoned in languages of local only or of professional access. Both Turpin and Geoffrey might indeed be read by eccclesiastics, the sole Latin scholars of those times, and Geoffrey's British original would contribute to the gratification of Welshmen; but neither could become extensively popular till translated into some language of general and familiar use. The Anglo-Saxon was at that time used only by a conquered and enslaved nation; the Spanish and Italian languages were not yet formed; the Norman French alone was spoken and understood by the nobility in the greater part of Europe, and therefore was a proper vehicle for the new mode of composition.

That language was fashionable in England before the Conquest, and became, after that event, the only language used at the court of London. As the various conquests of the Normans, and the enthusiastic valor of that extraordinary people, had familiarized the minds of men with the most marvellous events, their poets eagerly seized the fabulous legends of Arthur and Charlemagne, translated them into the language of the day, and soon produced a variety of imitations. The adventures attributed to these monarchs, and to their distinguished warriors, together with those of many other traditionary or imaginary heroes, composed by degrees that formidable body of marvellous histories which, from the dialect in which the most ancient of them were written, were called Romances.

Metrical Romances.

The earliest form in which romances appear is that of a rude kind of verse. In this form it is supposed they were sung or recited at the feasts of princes and knights in their baronial halls. The following specimen of the language and style of Robert de Beauvais, who flourished in the thirteenth century, is from Sir Walter Scott's Introduction to the "Romance of Sir Tristrem."

"Ne voil pas emmi dire,
Ici diverse la matyere,
Entre ceus qui solent cunter,
E de le cunte Tristran parler."

"I will not say too much about it,
So diverse is the matter,
Among those who are in the habit of telling
And relating the story of Tristran."

This is a specimen of the language which was in use among the nobility of England, in the ages immediately after the Norman conquest. The following is a specimen of the English that existed at the same time, among the common people. Robert de Brunne, speaking of his Latin and French authorities, says:

"Als thai haf wryten and sayd
Haf I alle in myn Inglis layd,
In symple speche as I couthe,
That is lightest in manne's mouthe.
Alle for the luf of symple men,
That strange Inglis cannot ken."

The "strange Inglis" being the language of the previous specimen.

It was not till toward the end of the thirteenth century that the prose romances began to appear. These works generally began with disowning and discrediting the sources from which in reality they drew their sole information. As every romance was supposed to be a real history, the compilers would have forfeited all credit if they had announced themselves as mere copyists of the minstrels. On the contrary, they usually state that, as the popular poems upon the matter in question contain many lesings,[1] they had been induced to translate the real and true history of such or such a knight from the original Latin or Greek, or from the ancient British or Armorican authorities, which authorities existed only in their own assertion.

A specimen of the style of the prose romances may be found in the following extract from one of the most celebrated and latest of them, the Morte d'Arthur by Sir Thomas Mallory, of fourteen hundred and eighty-five. From this work much of the contents of this volume has been drawn, with as close an adherence to the original style as was thought consistent with our plan of adapting our narrative to the taste of modern readers.

"It is notoyrly knowen thorugh the vnyuersal world that there

[1] Falsities.

been IX worthy and the best that ever were. That is to wete thre paynyms,[1] three Jewes, and three crysten men. As for the paynyms, they were tofore the Incarnacyon of Cryst whiche were named, the fyrst Hector of Troye; the second Alysaunder the grete, and the thyrd Julyus Cezar, Emperour of Rome, of whome thystoryes ben wel kno and had. And as for the thre Jewes whyche also were tofore thyncarnacyon of our Lord, of whome the fyrst was Duc Josue, whyche brought the chyldren of Israhel into the londe of beheste; the second Dauyd, kyng of Jherusalem, and the thyrd Judas Machabeus; of these thre the byble reherceth al theyr noble hystoryes and actes. And sythe the sayd Incarnacyon haue ben the noble crysten men stalled and admytted thorugh the vnyuersal world to the nombre of the IX beste and worthy, of whome was fyrst the noble Arthur, whose noble actes I purpose to wryte in this present book here folowyng. The second was Charlemayn, or Charles the grete, of whome thystorye is had in many places bothe in frensshe and englysshe, and the thyrd and last was Godefray of boloyn."

The Mab'i-no'ge-on.

It has been well known to the literati and antiquarians of Europe that there exist in the great public libraries voluminous manuscripts of romances and tales once popular, but which, on the invention of printing, had already become antiquated, and fallen into neglect. They were therefore never printed, and seldom perused even by the learned, until about a century ago, when attention was again directed to them, and they were found very curious monuments of ancient manners, habits, and modes of thinking. There was a class of manuscripts of this kind which were known, or rather suspected, to be both curious and valuable, but which it seemed almost hopeless to expect ever to see in fair printed English. These were the Welsh popular tales, called "Mabinogeon," a plural word, the singular being Mabinogi, a tale. The Welsh is a spoken language among the peasantry of Wales, but is entirely neglected by the learned, unless they are natives of the principality. Of the few Welsh scholars, none were found who took sufficient interest in this branch of learning to give these productions to the English public. Southey

[1] Pagans.

and Scott, and others who, like them, loved the old romantic legends of their country, often urged upon the Welsh literati the duty of reproducing the Mabinogeon. Southey, in the preface to his edition of Morte d'Arthur, says: "The specimens which I have seen are exceedingly curious; nor is there a greater desideratum in British literature than an edition of these tales, with a literal version, and such comments as Mr. Davies, of all men, is best qualified to give. Certain it is that many of the Round Table fictions originated in Wales, or in Bretagne, and probably might still be traced there."

Sharon Turner and Sir Walter Scott also expressed a similar wish for the publication of the Welsh manuscripts. The former took part in an attempt to effect it through the instrumentality of a Mr. Owen, a Welshman, but we judge, by what Southey says of him, that he was but imperfectly acquainted with English.

It is probable Mr. Owen did not proceed far in an undertaking which, so executed, could expect but little popular patronage. It was not till a person should appear possessed of the requisite knowledge of the two languages, of enthusiasm sufficient for the task, and of pecuniary resources sufficient to be independent of the booksellers and of the reading public, that such a work could be confidently expected. Such an individual appeared in the person of Lady Charlotte Guest, an English lady united to a gentleman of property in Wales, who, having acquired the language of the principality, and become enthusiastically fond of its literary treasures, has given them to the English reader, in a dress which the printer's and the engraver's arts have done their best to adorn. We claim no other merit than that of bringing it to the knowledge of our readers, of abridging its details, of selecting its most attractive portions, and of faithfully preserving throughout the style in which Lady Guest has clothed her legends. For this service we hope that our readers will confess we have laid them under no light obligation.

CHAPTER II.

THE MYTHICAL HISTORY OF ENGLAND.

Albion—Histion—Brutus—Bla'dud—Lear—Ferrex and Porrex—Dun'-wal'lo Mal-mu'ti-us Bren'-nus and Be-li'nus—El'i-dure—Lud—Cas'si-bel-lau'nus—Cym'be-line—Ar-mor'i-ca.

Albion.

THE early history of England is traditional. It goes back to the founding of Rome, and links us to the heroes of Troy. We have followed the account as given by John Milton in his admirable history. All history must be written with broad margins, while that which confesses to the traditional is but little better than ordinary fiction. According to the earliest accounts,

Albion, the Son of Neptune,

a contemporary of Hercules, ruled over the island, to which he gave his name. Presuming to oppose the progress of Hercules in his western march, he was slain by him.

> "For Albion the son of Neptune was;
> Who for the proof of his great puissance,
> Out of his Albion did on dry foot pass
> Into old Gaul that now is cleped France,
> To fight with Hercules, that did advance

To vanquish all the world with matchless might;
And there his mortal part by great mischance
Was slain."—SPENSER.

Another story, but one too improbable ever to have been generally believed, is that

Histion, the Son of Japhet,

the son of Noah, had four sons,—Francus, Romanus, Alemannus and Britto, from whom descended the French, Roman, German and British people.

Rejecting these and other like stories, Milton gives more regard to the story of

Brutus, the Trojan,

which, he says, is supported by "descents of ancestry long continued, laws and exploits not plainly seeming to be borrowed or devised, which on the common belief have wrought no small impression; defended by many, denied utterly by few." The principal authority is Geoffrey of Monmouth, whose history, written in the twelfth century, purports to be a translation of a history of Britain brought over from the opposite shore of France, which, under the name of Brittany, was chiefly peopled by natives of Britain. According to this authority, Brutus was the son of Silvius, and he of Ascanius, the son of Æneas, whose flight from Troy and settlement in Italy will be found narrated in "The Age of Fable."

Brutus, at the age of fifteen, attending his father to the chase, unfortunately killed him with an arrow. Banished therefor by his kindred, he sought refuge in that part of Greece where Helenus, with a band of Trojan exiles, had become established. But Helenus was now dead, and the descendants of the Trojans were oppressed by Pandrasus, the king of the country. Brutus, being kindly received among them, so throve in virtue and in arms as to win a regard above all others of his age. In consequence of this the Trojans not only began to hope, but secretly to persuade him to lead them the way to liberty. To encourage them, they had the promise of help from Assaracus, a noble Greek youth, whose mother was a Trojan. He had suffered wrong at the hands of the king, and for that reason the more willingly cast in his lot with the Trojan exiles.

Choosing a fit opportunity, Brutus with his countrymen withdrew to the woods and hills, as the safest place from which to expostulate, and sent this message to Pandrasus: "That the Trojans, holding it unworthy of their ancestors to serve in a foreign land, had retreated to the woods, choosing rather a savage life than a slavish one. If that displeased him, then, with his leave, they would depart to some other country." Pandrasus, not expecting so bold a message, went in pursuit of them, with such forces as he could gather, and met them on the banks of the Achelous, where Brutus got the advantage, and took the king captive. The result was, that the terms demanded by the Trojans were granted; the king gave his daughter Imogen in marriage to Brutus, and furnished shipping, money and fit provision for them all to depart from the land.

Diana of Versailles (Louvre).

The marriage being solemnized, and shipping from all parts got together, the Trojans, in a fleet of three hundred and twenty sail, betook themselves to the sea. On the third day they arrived at a certain island, which they found destitute of inhabitants, though there were appearances of former habitation, and among the ruins a temple of Diana. Brutus, here performing sacrifice at the shrine of the goddess, invoked an oracle for his guidance in these lines:

"Goddess of shades, and huntress, who at will
Walk'st on the rolling sphere, and through the deep;

On thy third realm, the earth, look now, and tell
What land, what seat of rest, thou bidd'st me seek;
What certain seats where I may worship thee
For aye, with temples vowed and virgin choirs."

To whom, sleeping before the altar, Diana in a vision thus answered:

"Brutus! far to the west, in the ocean wide,
Beyond the realm of Gaul, a land there lies,
Seagirt it lies, where giants dwelt of old;
Now, void, it fits thy people: thither bend
Thy course; there shalt thou find a lasting seat;
There to thy sons another Troy shall rise,
And kings be born of thee, whose dreaded might
Shall awe the world, and conquer nations bold."

Brutus, guided now, as he thought, by Divine direction, sped his course towards the west, and, arriving at a place on the Tyrrhene Sea, found there the descendants of certain Trojans who, with Antenor, came into Italy, of whom Corineus was the chief. These joined company, and the ships pursued their way till they arrived at the mouth of the river Loire, in France, where the expedition landed, with a view to a settlement, but were so rudely assaulted by the inhabitants that they put to sea again, and arrived at a part of the coast of Britain, now called Devonshire, where Brutus landed his colony and took possession.

The island, not yet Britain, but Albion, was in a manner desert and inhospitable, occupied only by a remnant of the giant race whose excessive force and tyranny had destroyed the others. The Trojans encountered these and extirpated them, Corineus in particular signalizing himself by his exploits against them; from whom Cornwall takes its name, for that region fell to his lot, and there the hugest giants dwelt, lurking in rocks and caves, till Corineus rid the land of them.

Brutus built his capital city, and called it Trojanova (New Troy), changed in time to Trinovantum, now London;

"For noble Britons sprong from Trojans bold,
And Troynovant was built of old Troy's ashes cold."—SPENSER.

Having governed the isle twenty-four years, he died, leaving three sons, Locrine, Albanact, and Camber. Locrine had the

middle part, Camber the west, called Cambria from him, and Albanact Albania, now Scotland. Locrine was married to Guendolen, the daughter of Corineus; but, having seen a fair maid named Estrildis, who had been brought captive from Germany, he became enamored of her, and had by her a daughter, whose name was Sabra. This matter was kept secret while Corineus lived; but after his death, Locrine divorced Guendolen, and made Estrildis his queen. Guendolen, all in rage, departed to Cornwall, where Madan, her son, lived, who had been brought up by Corineus, his grandfather. Gathering an army of her father's friends and subjects, she gave battle to her husband's forces, and Locrine was slain. Guendolen caused her rival, Estrildis, with her daughter Sabra, to be thrown into the river, from which cause the river thenceforth bore the maiden's name, which by length of time is now changed into Sabrina or Severn. Milton alludes to this in his address to the rivers,—

"Severn swift, guilty of maiden's death";—

and in his Comus tells the story with a slight variation:

"There is a gentle nymph not far from hence,
That with moist curb sways the smooth Severn stream;
Sabrina is her name, a virgin pure:
Whilom she was the daughter of Locrine,
That had the sceptre from his father, Brute.
She, guiltless damsel, flying the mad pursuit
Of her enragèd step-dame, Guendolen,
Commended her fair innocence to the flood,
That stayed her flight with his cross-flowing course.
The water-nymphs that in the bottom played,
Held up their pearlèd wrists and took her in,
Bearing her straight to aged Nereus' hall."

If our readers ask when all this took place, we must answer, in the first place, that mythology is not careful of dates; and next, that, as Brutus was the great-grandson of Æneas, it must have been not far from a century subsequent to the Trojan war, or about eleven hundred years before the invasion of the island by Julius Cæsar. This long interval is filled with the names of princes whose chief occupation was in warring with one another. Some few, whose names remain connected with places, or embalmed in literature, we will mention.

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Bla'dud.

Bladud built the city of Bath, and dedicated the medicinal waters to Minerva. He was a man of great invention, and practiced the arts of magic, till, having made him wings to fly, he fell down upon the temple of Apollo, in Trinovant, and so died, after twenty years' reign.

Lear.

Lear, who next reigned, built Leicester, and called it after his name. He had no male issue, but only three daughters. When grown old, he determined to divide his kingdom among his daughters, and bestow them in marriage. But first, to try which of them loved him best, he determined to ask them solemnly in order, and judge of the warmth of their affection by their answers. Goneril, the eldest, knowing well her father's weakness, made answer:

> "Sir I love you more than words can wield the matter,
> Dearer than eyesight, space, and liberty;
> No less than life, with grace, health, beauty, honor,
> As much as child e'er loved."—KING LEAR.

"Since thou so honorest my declining age," said the old man, "to thee and to thy husband I give the third part of my realm." Such good success for a few words soon uttered was ample instruction to Regan, the second daughter, what to say. She therefore to the same question replied:

> "I am made of the self-same metal as my sister,
> And prize me at her worth."—KING LEAR.

and so received an equal reward with her sister. But Cordeilla, the youngest, and hitherto the best beloved, too honest to profess in words more than she felt in her heart, was not moved from the solid purpose of a sincere and virtuous answer, and replied:

> "Unhappy that I am, I cannot heave
> My heart into my mouth: I love your Majesty
> According to my bond; no more, nor less."—KING LEAR.

When the old man, sorry to hear this, and wishing her to recall these words, persisted in asking, she still restrained her expressions so as to say rather less than more than the truth. Then Lear, all in a passion, burst forth:

LEAR.—Thou hast her France ; let her be thine ; for we
Have no such daughter, nor shall ever see
That face of her's again.—Therefore be gone
Without our grace, our love, our benison.

King Lear, Act I. Sc. I.

"For, by the sacred radiance of the sun,
The mysteries of Hecate, and the night;
By all the operations of the orbs,
For whom we do exist and cease to be;
Here I disclaim all my paternal care,
And as a stranger to my heart and me,
Hold thee, from this, for ever."—KING LEAR.

And without delay, giving in marriage his other daughters, Goneril to the Duke of Albany, and Regan to the Duke of Cornwall, he divides his kingdom between them. Cordeilla, portionless, married the prince of France, who shortly after succeeded his father upon the throne.

King Lear went to reside with his eldest daughter, attended only by a hundred knights. But in a short time his attendants, being complained of as too numerous and disorderly, are reduced to thirty. Resenting that affront, the old king betakes him to his second daughter; but she, instead of soothing his wounded pride, takes part with her sister, and refuses to admit a retinue of more than five. Then back he returns to the other, who now will not receive him with more than one attendant. Then the remembrance of Cordeilla comes to his thoughts, and he takes his journey into France to seek her, with little hope of kind consideration from one whom he had so injured, but to pay her the last recompense he can render—confession of his injustice. When Cordeilla is informed of his approach, and of his sad condition, she pours forth true filial tears. And, not willing that her own or others' eyes should see him in that forlorn condition, she sends one of her trusted servants to meet him, and convey him privately to some comfortable abode, and to furnish him with such state as befitted his dignity.

King Lear seems to have lost not only faith in others, but also in himself:

"Pray, do not mock me,
I am a very foolish, fond old man,
Fourscore and upward, not an hour more nor less,
And to deal plainly,
I fear I am not in my perfect mind."—KING LEAR.

Cordeilla, with the king her husband, went out to meet her father, who, because of his humiliation, attempted to kneel in her presence. She repelled the honor and exclaimed:

"O look upon me, sir,
And hold your hands in benediction o'er me.
No, sir, you must not kneel."—KING LEAR.

The king permitted his wife Cordeilla to go with an army and set her father again upon his throne. They prospered, subdued the wicked sisters and their consorts, and Lear obtained the crown and held it three years. Cordeilla succeeded him, and reigned five years; but the sons of her sisters, after that, rebelled against her, and she lost both her crown and life.

Shakespeare has chosen this story as the subject of his tragedy of King Lear, varying its details in some respects. The madness of Lear, and the ill success of Cordeilla's attempt to reinstate her father, are the principal variations. Our narrative is drawn from Milton's History; and thus the reader will perceive that the story of Lear has had the distinguished honor of being told by the two acknowledged chiefs of British literature.

Ferrex and Porrex.

Ferrex and Porrex were the sons of Gorboduc, who held the kingdom after Lear. The father, wishing to lay aside the affairs of state, resigned the crown and divided his kingdom between his sons:

"My love extendeth equally to both,
My land sufficeth for them both also.
Humber shall part the marches of their realm;
The southern part the elder shall possess,
The northern shall Porrex the younger rule.
In quiet I will pass mine aged days."—FERREX AND PORREX.

The elder son felt that he was entitled, by virtue of his age, to the entire kingdom:

"I marvel much what reason led the king,
My father, thus without all my desert,
To reave me half the kingdom, which by course
Of law and nature should remain to me."
—FERREX AND PORREX.

A war naturally followed, and Ferrex, having been defeated, was expelled from the country. He subsequently formed an alliance with Luard, King of the Franks, and, returning, made

war upon Porrex. The younger brother was again victorious, and Ferrex was slain.

When his mother Videna learned of her son's death she fell into a great rage, and conceived a mortal hatred against the survivor:

> "Dost thou know that Ferrex's mother lives,
> And doth she live and is not 'venged on thee?"
>
> —FERREX AND PORREX.

Videna carried out her purpose and became the slayer of her son. This story forms the plot of the first tragedy ever written in the English language. It was the joint product of Thomas Sackville, Earl of Dorset, and Thomas Norton, a barrister. It was primarily entitled Gorboduc, but changed to Ferrex and Porrex in the second edition. The date of the composition is fifteen hundred and sixty-one.

Dun-wal'lo Mol-mu'ti-us.

This is the next name of note. Molmutius established the Molmutine laws, which bestowed the privilege of sanctuary on temples, cities, and the roads leading to them, and gave the same protection to ploughs, extending a religious sanction to the labors of the field:

> "Molmutius made our laws;
> Who was the first of Britain which did put
> His brows within a golden crown, and called
> Himself a king."—CYMBELINE.

Bren'nus and Be-li'nus,

the sons of Molmutius, succeeded him. They quarrelled, and Brennus was driven out of the island, and took refuge in Gaul, where he met with such favor from the king of the Allobroges that he gave him his daughter in marriage, and made him his partner on the throne. Brennus is the name which the Roman historians give to the famous leader of the Gauls who took Rome in the time of Camillus. Geoffrey of Monmouth claims the glory of the conquest for the British prince, after he had become king of the Allobroges.

El'i-dure.

After Belinus and Brennus there reigned several kings of little note, and then came Elidure. Arthgallo, his brother, being king, gave great offence to his powerful nobles, who rose against

him, deposed him, and advanced Elidure to the throne. Arthgallo fled, and endeavored to find assistance in the neighboring kingdoms, but found none. Elidure reigned prosperously and wisely. After five years' possession of the kingdom, one day, when hunting, he met in the forest his brother Arthgallo, who had been deposed. After long wandering he had returned to Britain with only ten followers, designing to repair to those who had formerly been his friends. Elidure, at the sight of his brother in distress, forgetting all animosities, ran to him and embraced him :

"The royal Elidure who leads the chase
Hath checked his foaming courser. 'Can it be?
Methinks that I should recognize that face,
Though much disguised by long adversity.'
He gazed rejoicing, and again he gazed,
Confounded and amazed.
'It is the King, my brother!' and, by sound
Of his own voice, leaps upon the ground."—WORDSWORTH.

He took Arthgallo home and concealed him in the palace. After this he feigned himself sick, and, calling his nobles about him, induced them, partly by persuasion, partly by force, to consent to his abdicating the kingdom and reinstating his brother on the throne. The agreement being ratified, Elidure took the crown from his own head and put it on his brother's head. Arthgallo after this reigned ten years, well and wisely, exercising strict justice towards all men.

He died, and left the kingdom to his sons, who reigned with various fortunes, but were not long-lived, and left no offspring, so that Elidure was again advanced to the throne, and finished the course of his life in just and virtuous actions, receiving the name of the pious, from the love and admiration of his subjects.

Lud.

After Elidure, the Chronicle names many kings, but none of special note, till we come to Lud, who greatly enlarged Trinovant, his capital, and surrounded it with a wall. He changed its name, bestowing upon it his own, so that thenceforth it was called Lud's town, afterwards London. Lud was buried by the gate of the city, called after him Ludgate. He had two sons, but they were not old enough at the time of their father's death

to sustain the cares of government, and therefore their uncle Caswallaun, or Cassibellaunus, succeeded to the kingdom. He was a brave and magnificent prince, so that his fame reached to distant countries.

Cas'si-bel-lau'nus.

About this time it happened that Julius Cæsar, having subdued Gaul, came to the shore opposite Britain. And having resolved to add this island also to his conquests, he prepared ships and transported his army across the sea, to the mouth of the river Thames. Here he was met by Cassibellaun, with all his forces, and a battle ensued, in which Nennius, the brother of Cassibellaun, engaged in single combat with Cæsar. After several furious blows given and received, the sword of Cæsar stuck so fast in the shield of Nennius that it could not be pulled out, and, the combatants being separated by the intervention of the troops, Nennius remained possessed of this trophy. At last, after the greater part of the day was spent, the Britons poured in so fast that Cæsar was forced to retire to his fleet. And finding it useless to continue the war any longer at that time, he returned to Gaul.

"The fam'd Cassibelan, who was once at point
(O, giglot fortune!) to master Cæsar's sword,
Made Lud's town with rejoicing fires bright,
And Britons strut with courage."—CYMBELINE.

Cym'be-line.

Cæsar, on a second invasion of the island, was more fortunate. Cymbeline, the nephew of the king, was delivered to the Romans as a hostage for the faithful fulfilment of the treaty, and, being carried to Rome by Cæsar, he was there brought up in the Roman arts and accomplishments. Being afterwards restored to his country, and placed on the throne, he was attached to the Romans, and continued through all his reign at peace with them. His sons, Guiderius and Arviragus, who make their appearance in Shakespeare's play of Cymbeline, succeeded their father, and, refusing to pay tribute to the Romans, brought on another invasion.

"There be many Cæsars
Ere such another Julius. Britain is
A world by itself; and we will nothing pay
For wearing our own noses."—CYMBELINE.

Guiderius was slain, but Arviragus afterward made terms with the Romans, and reigned prosperously many years.

Ar-mor'i-ca.

The next event of note is the conquest and colonization of Armorica by Maximus, a Roman general, and Conan, lord of Miniadoc or Denbigh-land, in Wales. The name of the country was changed to Brittany, or Lesser Britain; and so completely was it possessed by the British colonists that the language became assimilated to that spoken in Wales, and it is said that to this day the peasantry of the two countries can understand each other when speaking their native language.

> "Nevertheless a British record long concealed
> In old Armorica, whose secret springs
> No Gothic conqueror ever drank, revealed
> The wondrous current of forgotten things."—WORDSWORTH.

The Romans eventually succeeded in establishing themselves in the island, and after the lapse of several generations they became blended with the natives so that no distinction existed between the two races. When at length the Roman armies were withdrawn from Britain, their departure was a matter of regret to the inhabitants, as it left them without protection against the barbarous tribes, Scots, Picts and Norwegians, who harassed the country incessantly. This was the state of things when the era of King Arthur began.

CHAPTER III.

Mer'lin—Viv'i-an.

Mer'lin.

MERLIN was the son of no mortal father, but of an Incubus, one of a class of beings not absolutely wicked, but far from good, who inhabit the regions of the air. Merlin's mother was a virtuous young woman, who, on the birth of her son, intrusted him to a priest, who hurried him to the baptismal fount, and so saved him from sharing the lot of his father, though he retained many marks of his unearthly origin.

At this time Vortigern reigned in Britain. He was a usurper, who had caused the death of his sovereign, Moines, and driven the two brothers of the late king, whose names were Uther and Pendragon, into banishment. Vortigern, who lived in constant fear of the return of the rightful heirs of the kingdom, began to erect a strong tower for defence. The edifice, when brought by the workmen to a certain height, three times fell to the ground without any apparent cause:

> The tower walls
> So fast as built fell crashing to the Earth.

The king consulted his astrologers on this wonderful event, and learned from them that it would be necessary to bathe the corner-stone of the foundation with the blood of a child born without a mortal father.

In search of such an infant, Vortigern sent his messengers all over the kingdom, and they by accident discovered Merlin, whose lineage seemed to point him out as the individual wanted. They took him to the king; but Merlin, young as he was, explained to the king the absurdity of attempting to rescue the fabric by such means, for he told him the true cause of the instability of the tower was its being placed over the den of two immense dragons, whose combats shook the earth above them. The king ordered his workmen to dig beneath the tower, and when they had done so they discovered two enormous serpents, the one white as milk, the other red as fire. The multitude looked on with amazement till the serpents, slowly rising from their den, and expanding their enormous folds, began the combat, when every one fled in terror except Merlin, who stood by clapping his hands and cheering on the conflict. The red dragon was slain, and the white one, gliding through a cleft in the rock, disappeared.

These animals typified, as Merlin afterwards explained, the invasion of Uther and Pendragon, the rightful princes, who soon after landed with a great army. Vortigern was defeated, and afterwards burned alive in the castle he had taken such pains to construct. On the death of Vortigern, Pendragon ascended the throne. Merlin became his chief adviser, and often assisted the king by his magical arts:

> "Merlin, who knew the range of all their arts,
> Had built the King his havens, ships and halls."—VIVIAN.

Among other endowments, he had the power of transforming himself into any shape he pleased. At one time he appeared as a dwarf, at others as a damsel, a page, or even a greyhound or a stag. This faculty he often employed for the service of the king, and sometimes also for the diversion of the court and the sovereign.

He continued to be a favorite counsellor through the reigns of Pendragon, Uther and Arthur, and at last disappeared from view, and was no more found among men, through the treachery of his mistress, Vivian, the Fairy, which happened in this wise.

Vivien's Wiles.

Viv'i-an.

Merlin, having become enamored of the fair Vivian, the Lady of the Lake, was weak enough to impart to her various important secrets of his art, being impelled by a fatal destiny, of which he was at the same time fully aware. The lady, however, was not content with his devotion, unbounded as it seems to have been, but "cast about," the Romance tells us, how she might "detain him for evermore," and one day addressed him in these terms: "Sir, I would that we should make a fair place and a suitable, so contrived by art and by cunning that it might never be undone, and that you and I should be there in joy and solace." "My lady," said Merlin, "I will do all this." "Then," said she:

> "O, Merlin, teach it me.
> The charm so taught will charm us both to rest.
> For, grant me some slight power upon your fate,
> I, feeling that you felt me worthy trust,
> Should rest and let you rest, knowing you mine."—VIVIAN.

"I grant you this," said Merlin. Then he began to devise, and the damsel put it all in writing. And when he had devised the whole, then had the damsel full great joy, and showed him greater semblance of love than she had ever before made, and they sojourned together a long while. At length it fell out that, as they were going one day hand-in-hand through the forest of Brécéliande, they found a bush of white-thorn, which was laden with flowers; and they seated themselves, under the shade of this white-thorn, upon the green grass, and Merlin laid his head upon the damsel's lap, and fell asleep. Then the damsel rose, and made a ring with her wimple round the bush and round Merlin, and began her enchantments, such as he himself had taught her; and nine times she made the ring, and nine times she made the enchantment, and then she went and sat down by him, and placed his head again upon her lap:

> "And a sleep
> Fell upon Merlin more like death, so deep
> Her finger on her lips; then Vivian rose,
> And from her brown-locked head the wimple throws,
> And takes it in her hand and waves it over
> The blossomed thorn tree and her sleeping lover.
> Nine times she waved the fluttering wimple round,
> And made a little plot of magic ground."—MATTHEW ARNOLD.

And when he awoke and looked round him, it seemed to him that he was enclosed in the strongest tower in the world, and laid upon a fair bed. Then said he to the dame: "My lady, you have deceived me, unless you abide with me, for no one hath power to unmake this tower but you alone":

> "Closed in the four walls of a hollow tower,
> From which was no escape for evermore;
> And none could find that man for evermore,
> Nor could he see but him who wrought the charm
> Coming and going, and he lay as dead."—VIVIAN.

She then promised she would be often there, and in this she held her covenant with him. And Merlin never went out of that tower where his Mistress Vivian had enclosed him; but she entered and went out again when she listed.

They talked of love and fame and the stirring scenes of Sir Arthur's court. Merlin lived only in the past. He felt the spell of Vivian's charm, but was impotent to break it:

> "There lived a king in the most Eastern East,
> Less old than I, yet older, for my blood
> Hath earnest in it of far springs to be.
> A tawny pirate anchor'd in his port,
> Whose bark had plunder'd twenty nameless isles,
> And passing one, at the high peep of dawn,
> He saw two cities in a thousand boats
> All fighting for a woman on the sea.
> And pushing his black craft among them all,
> He lightly scatter'd theirs and brought her off,
> With loss of half his people arrow-slain."—VIVIAN.

This woman afterwards became the scourge of the King and his kingdom. The armies disbanded, the young men sickened, and the very beasts felt the spell of her power. The King offered a prize to any wizard who would undo the charm. Those who attempted and failed were put to death:

> "And many tried and fail'd, because the charm
> Of nature in her overbore their own:
> And many a wizard brow bleach'd on the walls;
> And many weeks a troop of carrion-crows
> Hung like a cloud above the gateway towers."—VIVIAN.

In this strange event Merlin read the prophecy of his own death. He withdrew entirely from the world, and was never known again to hold converse with any mortal but Vivian, except on one occasion. Arthur, having for some time missed him

The Wizard's Doom.

from his court, sent several of his knights in search of him, and, among the number, Sir Gawain, who met with a very unpleasant adventure while engaged in this quest. Happening to pass a damsel on his road, and neglecting to salute her, she revenged

herself for his incivility by transforming him into a hideous dwarf. He was bewailing aloud his evil fortune as he went through the forest of Brécéliande, when suddenly he heard the voice of one groaning on his right hand; and, looking that way, he could see nothing save a kind of smoke, which seemed like air, and through which he could not pass. Merlin then addressed him from out the smoke, and told him by what misadventure he was imprisoned there. "Ah, sir!" he added, "you will never see me more, and that grieves me, but I cannot remedy it; I shall never more speak to you, nor to any other person, save only my mistress. But do thou hasten to King Arthur, and charge him from me to undertake, without delay, the quest of the Sacred Grail. The knight is already born, and has received knighthood at his hands, who is destined to accomplish this quest." And after this he comforted Gawain under his transformation, assuring him that he should speedily be disenchanted; and he predicted to him that he should find the king at Carduel, in Wales, on his return, and that all the other knights who had been on like quest would arrive there the same day as himself. And all this came to pass as Merlin had said.

Merlin is frequently introduced in the tales of chivalry, but it is chiefly on great occasions, and at a period subsequent to his death or magical disappearance. In the romantic poems of Italy, and in Spenser, Merlin is chiefly represented as a magical artist. Spenser represents him as the artificer of the impenetrable shield and other armor of Prince Arthur:

> "Merlin, which formerly did excel
> All living wights in mind or magic spell,
> Both shield and sword and armor all he wrought
> For this young prince." —FAERY QUEEN.

The Fountain of Love, in the Orlando Innamorato, is described as his work; and in the poem of Ariosto we are told of a hall adorned with prophetic paintings, which demons had executed in a single night, under the direction of Merlin:

> "This is the ancient memorable cave
> Which Merlin the Enchanter sage did make."
> —ORLANDO FURIOSO.

The following is from the third book of Spenser's Faery Queen. The scene is laid at Caer-Merdin, Merlin's tower, where he met his tragic end:

"A little while
Before that Merlin died, he did intend
A brazen wall in compas to compile
About Caermerdin, and did it commend
Unto these sprites to bring to perfect end;
During which work the Lady of the Lake,
Whom long he loved, for him in haste did send;
Who, thereby, forced his workmen to forsake,
Them bound till his return their labor not to slack.
In the mean time, through that false lady's train,
He was surprised, and buried under beare,
Nor ever to his work returned again."

Tennyson, however, ascribes a different though no less tragic end. Merlin and Vivian had quarrelled. He had accused her of falsity, and she determined to leave him forever:

"'But ere I leave you let me swear once more
That if I schemed against your peace in this,
May yon just heaven, that darkens o'er me, send
One flash, that, missing all things else, may make
My scheming brain a cinder, if I lie.'
"Scarce had she ceased, when out of heaven a bolt
(For now the storm was close above them) struck,
Furrowing a giant oak, and javelining
With darted spikes and splinters of the wood
The dark earth round. He raised his eyes and saw
The tree that shone white-listed through the gloom.
But Vivian, fearing Heaven had heard her oath,
And dazzled by the livid-flickering fork,
And deafen'd with the stammering cracks and claps
That follow'd, flying back and crying out,
'O Merlin, though you do not love me, save,
Yet save me!'
"Then in one moment, she put forth the charm
Of woven paces and of waving hands,
And in the hollow oak he lay as dead,
And lost to life and use and name and fame."—VIVIAN.

Merlin has been variously interpreted, and still remains a subject for the antiquarian. He has ranked all the way from a myth to a seer. An ingenious book appeared in England some

two hundred and fifty years ago, in which it was claimed that the wars, revolutions and national disasters that have come upon England were all foreshadowed in Merlin's prophecies:

> "Merlin, well versed in many a hidden spell,
> His country's omen did long since foretell."

The probabilities are that the truth in this instance, as in most others, lies somewhere between the two extremes. But the real is so involved in the mythical that to discriminate at this distance is impossible.

Vivien's Charm

CHAPTER IV.

Ar'thur—Constans—Arthur Chosen King—Guin'evere—The Marriage of Arthur and Guin'evere—How Tor Became a Knight—Ga'wain's Victory.

Ar'thur.

We shall begin our history of King Arthur by giving those particulars of his life which appear to rest on historical evidence; and then proceed to record those legends concerning him which form the earliest portion of British literature.

Arthur was a prince of the tribe of Britons called Silures, whose country was South Wales—the son of Uther, named Pendragon, a title given to an elective sovereign, paramount over the many kings of Britain. He appears to have commenced his martial career about the year five hundred, and was raised to the Pendragonship about ten years later. He is said to have gained twelve victories over the Saxons. The most important of them was that of Badon, by some supposed to be Bath, by others Berkshire. This was the last of his battles with the Saxons, and checked their progress so effectually that Arthur experienced no more annoyance from them, and reigned in peace until the revolt of his nephew Modred, twenty years later, which led to the fatal battle of Camlan, in Cornwall, in five hundred and forty-two. Modred was slain, and Arthur, mortally wounded, was conveyed by sea to Glastonbury, where he died, and was buried. Tradition preserved the memory of the place of his interment

within the abbey, as we are told by one who was present when the grave was opened by command of Henry II. about the year eleven hundred and fifty, and saw the bones and sword of the monarch, and a leaden cross let into his tombstone, with the inscription in rude Roman letters, "Here lies buried the famous King Arthur, in the island Avalonia."

"Or mythic Uther's deeply wounded son,
In some fair space of sloping greens,
Lay dozing in the vale of Avalon,
And watched by weeping queens."
—PALACE OF ART.

This story has been elegantly versified by Warton. A popular traditional belief was long entertained among the Britons that Arthur was not dead, but had been carried off to be healed of his wounds in Fairy-land, and that he would reappear to avenge his countrymen and reinstate them in the sovereignty of Britain. In Warton's Ode a bard relates to King Henry the traditional story of Arthur's death, and closes with these lines:

"Yet in vain a paynim foe
Armed with fate the mighty blow;
For when he fell, the Elfin queen,
All in secret and unseen,
O'er the fainting hero threw
Her mantle of ambrosial blue,
And bade her spirits bear him far,
In Merlin's agate-axled car,
To her green isle's enamelled steep,
Far in the navel of the deep.
O'er his wounds she sprinkled dew
From flowers that in Arabia grew.
There he reigns a mighty king,
Thence to Britain shall return,
If right prophetic rolls I learn,
Borne on victory's spreading plume,
His ancient sceptre to resume,
His knightly table to restore,
And brave the tournaments of yore."

After this narration another bard came forward, who recited a different story:

"When Arthur bowed his haughty crest,
No princess veiled in azure vest
Snatched him, by Merlin's powerful spell,
In groves of golden bliss to dwell;
But when he fell, with winged speed,
His champions, on a milk-white steed,
From the battle's hurricane,
Bore him to Joseph's towered fane[1]
In the fair vale of Avalon;
There, with chanted orison
And the long blaze of tapers clear,
The stoled fathers met the bier;
Through the dim aisles, in order dread
Of martial woe, the chief they led,
And deep entombed in holy ground,
Before the altar's solemn bound."

It must not be concealed that the very existence of Arthur has been denied by some. Milton says of him: "As to Arthur, more renowned in songs and romances than in true stories, who he was, and whether ever any such reigned in Britain, hath been doubted heretofore, and may again, with good reason." Modern critics, however, admit that there was a prince of this name, and find proof of it in the frequent mention of him in the writings of the Welsh bards. But the Arthur of romance, according to Mr. Owen, a Welsh scholar and antiquarian, is a mythological person. "Arthur," he says, "is the Great Bear, as the name literally implies Arctos, Arcturus, and perhaps this constellation, being so near the pole, and visibly describing a circle in a small space, is the origin of the famous Round Table":

"Dost thou know the star
We call the Harp of Arthur up in heaven?"
—THE LAST TOURNAMENT.

Let us now turn to the history of King Arthur as recorded by the romantic chroniclers.

Constans.

Constans, King of Britain, had three sons, Moines, Ambrosius, otherwise called Uther, and Pendragon. Moines, soon after his accession to the crown, was vanquished by the Saxons,

[1] Glastonbury Abbey, said to be founded by Joseph of Arimathea, in a spot anciently called the island or valley of Avalonia.

in consequence of the treachery of his seneschal, Vortigern, and growing unpopular, through misfortune, he was killed by his subjects, and the traitor Vortigern chosen in his place.

Vortigern was soon after defeated in a great battle by Uther and Pendragon, the surviving brothers of Moines, and Pendragon ascended the throne.

This prince had great confidence in the wisdom of Merlin, and made him his chief adviser. About this time a dreadful war arose between the Saxons and Britons:

> "For many a petty king ere Arthur came
> Ruled in this isle, and ever waging war
> Each upon the other, wasted all the land."
> —COMING OF ARTHUR.

Merlin obliged the royal brothers to swear fidelity to each other, but predicted that one of them must fall in the first battle. The Saxons were routed, and Pendragon, being slain, was succeeded by Uther, who now assumed in addition to his own name the appellation of Pendragon.

Merlin next proceeded to Carlisle to prepare the Round Table, at which he seated an assemblage of the great nobles of the country. The companions admitted to this high order were bound by oath to assist each other at the hazard of their own lives, to attempt singly the most perilous adventures, to lead, when necessary, a life of monastic solitude, to fly to arms at the first summons, and never to retire from battle till they had defeated the enemy, unless night intervened and separated the combatants:

> "It was the time when the first the question rose
> About the founding of a Table Round."—VIVIAN.

Soon after this institution the king invited all his barons to the celebration of a great festival, which he proposed holding annually at Carlisle.

As the knights had obtained the sovereign's permission to bring their ladies along with them, the beautiful Igerne accompanied her husband, Gorlois, Duke of Tintadiel, to one of these anniversaries. The king became deeply enamored of the Duchess, and disclosed his passion; but Igerne repelled his advances, and revealed his solicitations to her husband. On hear-

ing this, the Duke instantly removed from court with Igerne, and without taking leave of Uther. The king complained to his council of this want of duty, and they decided that the Duke should be summoned to court, and, if refractory, should be treated as a rebel. As he refused to obey the citation, the king carried war into the estates of his vassal, and besieged him in the strong castle of Tintadiel. Merlin transformed the king into the likeness of Gorlois, and enabled him to have many stolen interviews with Igerne. At length the Duke was killed in battle, and the king espoused Igerne.

From this union sprang Arthur, who succeeded his father, Uther, upon the throne:

The Finding of Arthur.

"And that night the bard
Sang Arthur's glorious wars, and sang the King
As well-nigh more than man, and rail'd at those
Who call'd him the false son of Gorloïs;
For there was no man knew from whence he came;
But after tempest, when the long wave broke
All down the thundering shores of Bude and Bos,
There came a day as still as heaven, and then

They found a naked child upon the sands
Of dark Dundagil by the Cornish sea;
And that was Arthur; and they foster'd him
Till he by miracle was approven king:
And that his grave should be a mystery
From all men, like his birth."—GUINEVERE.

Arthur Chosen King.

Arthur, though only fifteen years old at his father's death, was elected king at a general meeting of the nobles. It was not done without opposition, for there were many ambitious competitors:

"For while he linger'd there
A doubt that ever smoulder'd in the hearts
Of those great Lords and Barons of his realm
Flash'd forth and into war: for most of these
Made head against him, crying, 'Who is he
That he should rule us? who hath proven him
King Uther's son? for lo! we look at him,
And find nor face nor bearing, limbs nor voice,
Are like to those of Uther whom we knew."
—COMING OF ARTHUR.

But Bishop Brice, a person of great sanctity, on Christmas eve addressed the assembly, and represented that it would well become them, at that solemn season, to put up their prayers for some token which should manifest the intentions of Providence respecting their future sovereign. This was done, and with such success that the service was scarcely ended when a miraculous stone was discovered before the church door, and in the stone was firmly fixed a sword, with the following words engraven on its hilt:

"I am hight Escalibore,
Unto a king fair tresore."

Bishop Brice, after exhorting the assembly to offer up their thanksgivings for this signal miracle, proposed a law that whoever should be able to draw out the sword from the stone should be acknowledged as sovereign of the Britons; and his proposal was decreed by general acclamation. The tributary kings of Uther and the most famous knights successively put their strength to the proof, but the miraculous sword resisted all their efforts. It stood till Candlemas; it stood till Easter, and till Pentecost,

when the best knights in the kingdom usually assembled for the annual tournament. Arthur, who was at that time serving in the capacity of squire to his foster-brother Sir Kay, attended his master to the lists. Sir Kay fought with great valor and success, but had the misfortune to break his sword, and sent Arthur to his mother for a new one. Arthur hastened home, but did not find the lady; but having observed near the church a sword sticking in a stone, he galloped to the place, drew out the sword with great ease, and delivered it to his master.[1] Sir Kay would willingly have assumed to himself the distinction conferred by the possession of the sword; but when, to confirm the doubters, the sword was replaced in the stone, he was utterly unable to withdraw it, and it would yield a second time to no hand but Arthur's. Thus decisively pointed out by Heaven as their king, Arthur was, by general consent, proclaimed as such, and an early day appointed for his solemn coronation:

"And near him stood the Lady of the Lake,—
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful.
She gave the king his huge cross-hilted sword,
Whereby to drive the heathen out: a mist
Of incense curl'd about her, and her face
Well-nigh was hidden in the minster gloom,
But there was heard among the holy hymns
A voice as of the waters, for she dwells
Down in a deep, calm, whatsoever storms
May shake the world, and, when the surface rolls,
Hath power to walk the waters like our Lord."

—COMING OF ARTHUR.

Immediately after his election to the crown, Arthur found himself opposed by eleven kings and one duke, who with a vast army were actually encamped in the forest of Rockingham:

"Yet Merlin thro' his craft
Had Arthur crown'd; but after, the great lords
Banded, and so brake out in open war."

—COMING OF ARTHUR.

By Merlin's advice Arthur sent an embassy to Brittany to solicit the aid of King Ban and King Bohort, two of the best knights

[1] A similar instance is recorded of Theseus, "Age of Fable," page 191.

in the world. They accepted the call, and with a powerful army crossed the sea, landing at Portsmouth, where they were received with great rejoicing. The rebel kings were still superior in numbers; but Merlin, by a powerful enchantment, caused all their tents to fall down at once, and in the confusion Arthur with his allies fell upon them and totally routed them:

"When Arthur first his court began,
And was approved king,
By force of arms great victories won,
And conquests home did bring."—PERCY'S RELIQUES.

After defeating the rebels, Arthur took the field against the Saxons. As they were too strong for him unaided, he sent an embassy to Armorica, beseeching the assistance of Hoel, who soon after brought over an army to his aid. The two kings joined their forces, and sought the enemy, whom they met, and both sides prepared for a decisive engagement. "Arthur himself," as Geoffrey of Monmouth relates, "dressed in a breastplate worthy of so great a king, places on his head a golden helmet engraved with the semblance of a dragon. Over his shoulders he throws his shield called Priwen, on which a picture of the Holy Virgin constantly recalled her to his memory. Girt with Excalibur, a most excellent sword, and fabricated in the isle of Avalon, he graces his right hand with the lance named Ron. This was a long and broad spear, well contrived for slaughter." After a severe conflict, Arthur, calling on the name of the Virgin, rushes into the midst of his enemies, and destroys multitudes of them with the formidable Excalibur, and puts the rest to flight. Hoel, being detained by sickness, took no part in this battle.

This is called the victory of Mount Badon, and, however disguised by fable, it is regarded by historians as a real event:

"They sung how he himself at Badon bore, that day,
When at the glorious goal his British scepter lay;
Two daies together how the battel stronglie stood;
Pendragon's worthie son, who waded there in blood,
Three hundred Saxons slew with his owne valiant hand."

—DRAYTON.

Guin'e-vere.

Merlin had planned for Arthur a marriage with the daughter of King Laodegan of Carmalide:

> "Leodogran, the King of Cameliard,
> Had one fair daughter, and none other child;
> And she was fairest of all flesh on earth,
> Guinevere, and in her his one delight."
>
> —Coming of Arthur.

By his advice Arthur paid a visit to the court of that sovereign, attended only by Merlin and by thirty-nine knights whom the magician had selected for that service. On their arrival they found Laodegan and his peers sitting in council, endeavoring, but with small prospect of success, to devise means of resisting the impending attack of Ryence, King of Ireland, who, with fifteen tributary kings and an almost innumerable army, had nearly surrounded the city. Merlin, who acted as leader of the band of British knights, announced them as strangers, who came to offer the king their services in his wars; but under the express condition that they should be at liberty to conceal their names and quality until they should think proper to divulge them. These terms were thought very strange, but were thankfully accepted, and the strangers, after taking the usual oath to the king, retired to the lodging which Merlin had prepared for them:

> "A doubtful throne is ice on summer seas—
> Ye come from Arthur's court: think ye this king—
> So few his knights, however brave they be—
> Hath body enow to beat his foemen down?"
>
> —Coming of Arthur.

A few days after this the enemy, regardless of a truce into which they had entered with King Laodegan, suddenly issued from their camp and made an attempt to surprise the city. Cleodalis, the king's general, assembled the royal forces with all possible despatch. Arthur and his companions also flew to arms, and Merlin appeared at their head, bearing a standard on which was emblazoned a terrific dragon. Merlin advanced to the gate and commanded the porter to open it, which the porter refused to do without the king's order. Merlin thereupon took

up the gate, with all its appurtenances of locks, bars and bolts, and directed his troop to pass through, after which he replaced it in perfect order. He then set spurs to his horse, and dashed, at the head of his little troop, into a body of two thousand Pagans. The disparity of numbers being so enormous, Merlin cast a spell upon the enemy, so as to prevent their seeing the small number of their assailants; notwithstanding which the British knights were hard pressed. But the people of the city, who saw from the walls this unequal contest, were ashamed of leaving the small body of strangers to their fate, so they opened the gate and sallied forth:

"And Guinevere
Stood by the castle walls to watch him pass;
But since he neither wore on helm or shield
The golden symbol of his kinglihood,
But rode a simple knight among his knights,
And many of these in richer arms than he,
She saw him not, or mark'd not, if she saw,
One among many, tho' his face was bare.
But Arthur, looking downward as he past,
Felt the light of her eyes into his life."

—COMING OF ARTHUR.

The numbers were now more nearly equal, and Merlin revoked his spell, so that the two armies encountered on fair terms. Where Arthur, Ban, Bohort, and the rest fought, the king's army had the advantage; but in another part of the field the king himself was surrounded and carried off by the enemy. This sad sight was seen by Guinevere, the fair daughter of the king, who stood on the city wall and looked at the battle. She was in dreadful distress, tore her hair, and swooned away.

But Merlin, aware of what passed in every part of the field, suddenly collected his knights, led them out of the battle, intercepted the passage of the party who were carrying away the king, charged them with irresistible impetuosity, cut in pieces or dispersed the whole escort, and rescued the king. In the fight Arthur encountered Caulang, a giant fifteen feet high, and the fair Guinevere, who already began to feel a strong interest in the handsome young stranger, trembled for the issue of the contest. But Arthur, dealing a dreadful blow on the shoulder of the monster, cut through his neck so that his head hung over

on one side, and in this condition his horse carried him about the field, to the great horror and dismay of the Pagans. Guinevere could not refrain from expressing aloud her wish that the gentle knight, who dealt with giants so dexterously, were destined to become her husband, and the wish was echoed by her attendants:

> "She saw,
> Wet with the mists and smitten by the lights,
> The Dragon of the great Pendragonship
> Blaze, making all the night a steam of fire."—GUINEVERE.

The enemy soon turned their backs, and fled with precipitation, closely pursued by Laodegan and his allies.

After the battle Arthur was disarmed and conducted to the bath by the Princess Guinevere, while his friends were attended by the other ladies of the court. After the bath the knights were conducted to a magnificent entertainment, at which they were diligently served by the same fair attendants. Laodegan, more and more anxious to know the name and quality of his generous deliverers, and occasionally forming a secret wish that the chief of his guests might be captivated by the charms of his daughter, appeared silent and pensive, and was scarcely roused from his reverie by the banters of his courtiers:

> "Fear not to give this king thine only child,
> Guinevere: so great bards of him will sing
> Hereafter, and dark sayings from of old
> Raging and ringing thro' the minds of men,
> And echo'd by old folk beside their fires
> For comfort after their wage-work is done,
> Speak of the king."—COMING OF ARTHUR.

Arthur, having had an opportunity of explaining to Guinevere his great esteem for her merit, was in the joy of his heart, and was still further delighted by hearing from Merlin the late exploits of Gawain at London, by means of which his immediate return to his dominions was rendered unnecessary, and he was left at liberty to protract his stay at the court of Laodegan. Every day contributed to increase the admiration of the whole court for the gallant strangers, and the passion of Guinevere for their chief; and when at last Merlin announced to the king that the object of the visit of the party was to procure a bride for

their leader, Laodegan at once presented Guinevere to Arthur, telling him that, whatever might be his rank, his merit was sufficient to entitle him to the possession of the heiress of Carmalide:

> "And could he find a woman in her womanhood
> As great as he was in his manhood—
> The twain together might change the world."—GUINEVERE.

Arthur accepted the lady with the utmost gratitude, and Merlin then proceeded to satisfy the king of the rank of his son-in-law; upon which Laodegan, with all his barons, hastened to do homage to their lawful sovereign, the successor of Uther Pendragon.

The Marriage of Arthur and Guinevere.

The fair Guinevere was then solemnly betrothed to Arthur, and a magnificent festival was proclaimed, which lasted seven days:

> "The king
> That morn was married, while in stainless white,
> The fair beginners of a nobler time,
> And glorying in their vows and him, his knights
> Stood round him, and rejoicing in his joy.
> And holy Dubric spread his hands and spake,
> 'Reign ye, and live and love, and make the world
> Other, and may thy Queen be one with thee,
> And all this Order of thy Table Round
> Fulfil the boundless purpose of their king."
> —COMING OF ARTHUR.

King Arthur, as was customary at royal weddings, granted boons to all his subjects, which leads us to relate

How Tor Became a Knight.

One day during the wedding festivities of the king a poor peasant came into his court riding upon a lean horse. He was accompanied by a fair young man of eighteen years. The peasant asked of each one whom he met, "Where shall I find King Arthur?" "Yonder he is," was the reply; "wilt thou anything with him?" "Yea," said the poor man; "therefore came I hither." He then approached the king and cried: "O King Arthur, the flower of all knights and kings, I beseech

Guinevere.

Jesus save thee. Sir, I was told that at this time of thy marriage thou wouldst grant any request except it were unreasonable." "Such is true," said the king, "and so will I do if it touch not my estate or my kingdom." "Ye say well," exclaimed the peasant, "and I ask nothing else but ye will make my son here a knight." "It is a great thing ye ask of me," said the king; "but what is thy name?" "Sir," replied the poor man, "my name is Aries the Cowherd." "Whether cometh this of thee or thy son?" asked the king. "Nay, sir," said Aries, "this desire cometh of my son, and not of me." He then told the king that he had thirteen sons, all of whom were willing to labor save Tor, who refused to do any work whatever, but only delighted in fighting, shooting, and had no wish but to be a knight. "What is thy name?" asked the king of the young man. "Sir," he replied, "my name is Tor."

The king then ordered Aries the Cowherd to bring his thirteen sons before him, which he did. They all resembled their father but Tor, who bore him no resemblance at all. "Now," said the king unto Aries, "where is the sword, that he shall be made a knight withal?" "It is here," said Tor. The king ordered him to dismount and request knighthood. This the young man did; and kneeling before the king prayed that he might be made one of the Round Table. King Arthur smote him upon the neck and said: "Be ye a good knight, so I pray God, and if ye be found worthy ye shall belong to the Round Table." The king then turned to Merlin and demanded whether or no Tor would prove himself a good knight. "Yes, sir, he ought to," Merlin replied, "for he is of kingly blood." "How so?" asked King Arthur. Then Merlin told the king that Aries the Cowherd was of no kin to the boy, but his father was none other than Pellenore himself. The next day King Pellenore came to the court, and was overjoyed to see his son and know that he had been knighted by Sir Arthur. So Tor was the first knight made by the king in honor of his marriage with Queen Guinevere. He was a brother to the unfortunate Elaine, the plain, blunt man of all the court.

"Then the rough Tor began to heave and move,
And bluster with stormy sobs."—ELAINE.

Ga'wain's Victory.

We must now relate what took place at and near London while Arthur was absent from his capital. At this very time a band of young heroes were on their way to Arthur's court for the purpose of receiving knighthood from him. They were Gawain and his three brothers, nephews of Arthur, sons of King Lot, and Galachin, another nephew, son of King Nanters. King Lot had been one of the rebel chiefs whom Arthur had defeated, but he now hoped by means of the young men to be reconciled to his brother-in-law. He equipped his sons and his nephew with the utmost magnificence, giving them a splendid retinue of young men, sons of earls and barons, all mounted on the best horses, with complete suits of choice armor. They numbered in all seven hundred, but only nine had yet received the order of knighthood; the rest were candidates for that honor, and anxious to earn it by an early encounter with the enemy. Gawain, the leader, was a knight of wonderful strength; but what was most remarkable about him was that his strength was greater at certain hours of the day than at others. From nine o'clock till noon his strength was doubled, and so it was from three to even-song; for the rest of the time it was less remarkable, though at all times surpassing that of ordinary men.

After a march of three days they arrived in the vicinity of London, where they expected to find Arthur and his court; and very unexpectedly fell in with a large convoy belonging to the enemy, consisting of numerous carts and wagons, all loaded with provisions, and escorted by three thousand men, who had been collecting spoil from all the country round. A single charge from Gawain's impetuous cavalry was sufficient to disperse the escort and recover the convoy, which was instantly despatched to London. But before long a body of seven thousand fresh soldiers advanced to the attack of the five princes and their little army. Gawain, singling out a chief named Choas, of gigantic size, began the battle by splitting him from the crown of the head to the breast. Thus they kept the great army of assailants at bay, though hard pressed, till of a sudden they perceived a strong body of the citizens advancing from London, where the convoy which had been recovered by Gawain had

arrived, and informed the mayor and citizens of the danger of their deliverer. The arrival of the Londoners soon decided the contest. The enemy fled in all directions, and Gawain and his friends, escorted by the grateful citizens, entered London, and were received with acclamations.

CHAPTER V.

Ar'thur (continued)—His Coronation—He Slays St. Michael's Giant—Gets a Sword from the Lady of the Lake.

Ar'thur.

After the great victory of Mount Badon, by which the Saxons were for the time effectually put down, Arthur turned his arms against the Scots and Picts, whom he routed at Lake Lomond, and compelled to sue for mercy. He then went to York, and employed himself in restoring the Christian churches which the Pagans had rifled and overthrown. The following summer he conquered Ireland, and then made a voyage with his fleet to Iceland, which he also subdued. The kings of Gothland and of the Orkneys came voluntarily and made their submission, promising to pay tribute. Then he returned to Britain, where, having established the kingdom, he dwelt twelve years in peace.

During this time he invited over to him all persons whatsoever that were famous for valor in foreign nations, and augmented the number of his domestics, and introduced such politeness into his court as people of the remotest countries thought worthy of their imitation. So that there was not a nobleman who thought him-

self of any consideration unless his clothes and arms were made in the same fashion as those of Arthur's knights.

Finding himself so powerful at home, Arthur began to form designs for extending his power abroad. So, having prepared his fleet, he first attempted Norway, that he might procure the crown of it for Lot, his sister's husband. Arthur landed in Norway, fought a great battle with the king of that country, defeated him, and pursued the victory till he had reduced the whole country under his dominion and established Lot upon the throne. Then Arthur made a voyage to Gaul and laid siege to the city of Paris. Gaul was at that time a Roman province, and governed by Flollo, the Tribune. When the siege of Paris had continued a month, and the people began to suffer from famine, Flollo challenged Arthur to single combat, proposing to decide the conquest of the province in that way. Arthur gladly accepted the challenge, and slew his adversary in the contest, upon which the citizens surrendered the city to him:

> "I conquered all Gallya,
> That now is called France,
> And slew the hardye Floll in feild
> My honor to advance."—PERCY'S RELIQUES.

After the victory Arthur divided his army into two parts, one of which he committed to the conduct of Hoel, while he with the other part should endeavor to subdue the other provinces. At the end of nine years, in which time all the parts of Gaul were entirely reduced, Arthur returned to Paris, and, calling an assembly of the clergy and people, established peace and the just administration of the laws in that kingdom. Then he bestowed Normandy upon Bedver, his butler, and the province of Andegavia upon Kay, his steward,[1] and several other provinces upon his great men that attended him:

> "What doest thou, scullion, in my fellowship?
> Deem'st thou that I accept thee aught the more
> Or love thee better, that by some device
> Full cowardly, or by mere unhappiness,

[1] This name, in the French romances, is spelled Queux, which means head cook. He is the Seneschal or Steward, his duties also embracing those of chief of the cooks.

Thou hast overthrown and slain thy master—thou!—
Dish-washer and broach-turner, loon!—to me
Thou smellest all of kitchen as before."—GARETH AND LYNETTE.

And, having settled the peace of the cities and countries, he returned back in the beginning of spring to Britain.

Arthur's Coronation.

Upon the approach of the feast of Pentecost, Arthur resolved, during that season, to hold a magnificent court, to place the crown upon his head, and to invite all the kings and dukes under his subjection to the solemnity. And he pitched upon Caerleon, the City of Legions, as the proper place for his purpose. For, besides its great wealth above the other cities,[1] its situation upon the river Usk, near the Severn sea, was most pleasant and fit for so great a solemnity. For on one side it was washed by that noble river, so that the kings and princes from the countries beyond the seas might have the convenience of sailing up to it. On the other side the beauty of the meadows and groves, and magnificence of the royal palaces, with lofty gilded roofs that adorned it, made it even rival the grandeur of Rome. It was also famous for two churches, whereof one was adorned with a choir of virgins, who devoted themselves wholly to the service of God, and the other maintained a convent of priests. Besides, there was a college of two hundred philosophers, who, being learned in astronomy and the other arts, were diligent in observing the courses of the stars, and gave Arthur true predictions of the events that would happen. In this place, therefore, which afforded such delights, were preparations made for the ensuing festival.

Ambassadors were then sent into several kingdoms to invite to court the princes both of Gaul and of the adjacent islands. Accordingly there came Augusel, King of Albania, now Scot-

[1] Several cities are allotted to King Arthur by the romance-writers. The principal are Caerleon, Camelot and Carlisle.

Caerleon derives its name from its having been the station of one of the legions during the dominion of the Romans.

Camelot is thought to be Winchester.

Shalott is Guildford.

Hamo's Port is Southampton.

Carlisle is the city still retaining that name, near the Scottish border.

land; Cadwallo, King of Venedotia, now North Wales; Sater, King of Demetia, now South Wales; also the archbishops of the metropolitan sees, London and York, and Dubricius, Bishop of Caerleon, the City of Legions. This prelate, who was primate of Britain, was so eminent for his piety that he could cure any sick person by his prayers. There were also the counts of the principal cities, and many other worthies of no less dignity.

From the adjacent islands came Guillamurius, King of Ireland; Gunfasius, King of the Orkneys; Malvasius, King of Iceland; Lot, King of Norway; Bedver, the butler, Duke of Normandy; Kay, the sewer, Duke of Andegavia; also the twelve peers of Gaul, and Hoel, Duke of the Armorican Britons, with his nobility, who came with such a train of mules, horses and rich furniture as it is difficult to describe. Besides these, there remained no prince of any consideration on this side of Spain who came not upon this invitation.

When all were assembled, upon the day of the solemnity, the archbishops were conducted to the palace in order to place the crown upon the king's head. Then Dubricius, the archbishop, inasmuch as the court was held in his diocese, made himself ready to celebrate the office. As soon as the king was invested with his royal habiliments, he was conducted in great pomp to the metropolitan church, having four kings, viz., of Albania, Cornwall, Demetia and Venedotia, bearing four golden swords before him. On another part was the queen, dressed out in her richest ornaments, conducted by the archbishops and bishops to the Church of Virgins; the four queens, also, of the kings last mentioned, bearing before her four white doves, according to ancient custom. When the whole procession was ended, so transporting was the harmony of the musical instruments and voices, whereof there was a vast variety in both churches, that the knights who attended were in doubt which to prefer, and therefore crowded from the one to the other by turns. At last, when divine service was over at both churches, the king and queen put off their crowns, and, putting on their lighter ornaments, went to the banquet. When they had all taken their seats according to precedence, Kay, the sewer, in rich robes of ermine, with a thousand young noblemen all in like manner

clothed in rich attire, served up the dishes. From another part Bedver, the butler, was followed by the same number of attendants, who waited with all kinds of cups and drinking-vessels. And there was food and drink in abundance, and everything was of the best kind and served in the best manner. For at that time Britain had arrived at such a pitch of grandeur that in riches, luxury and politeness it far surpassed all other kingdoms.

As soon as the banquets were over, they went into the fields without the city to divert themselves with various sports, such as shooting with bows and arrows, tossing the pike, casting of heavy stones and rocks, playing at dice, and the like, and all these inoffensively and without quarrelling. In this manner were three days spent, and after that they separated, and the kings and noblemen departed to their several homes.

After this Arthur reigned five years in peace. Then came ambassadors from Lucius Tiberius, Procurator under Leo, Emperor of Rome, demanding tribute:

> "Then at the marriage feast came in from Rome,
> The slowly fading mistress of the world,
> Great lords, who claimed the tribute as before.
> But Arthur spoke: 'Behold, for these have sworn
> To fight my wars and worship me, their King,
> The old order changeth, yielding place to new;
> No tribute will we pay.' So those great lords
> Drew back in wrath."—COMING OF ARTHUR.

But Arthur refused to pay tribute, and prepared for war. As soon as the necessary dispositions were made, he committed the government of his kingdom to his nephew Modred and to Queen Guinevere, and marched with his army to Hamo's Port, where the wind stood fair for him. The army crossed over in safety, and landed at the mouth of the river Barba. And there they pitched their tents to wait the arrival of the kings of the islands.

As soon as all the forces were arrived, Arthur marched forward to Augustodunum, and encamped on the banks of the river Alba. Here repeated battles were fought, in all which the Britons, under their valiant leaders, Hoel, Duke of Armorica, and Gawain, nephew to Arthur, had the advantage. At length Lucius

Tiberius determined to retreat, and wait for the Emperor Leo to join him with fresh troops. But Arthur, anticipating this event, took possession of a certain valley, and closed up the way of retreat to Lucius, compelling him to fight a decisive battle, in which Arthur lost some of the bravest of his knights and most faithful followers. But, on the other hand, Lucius Tiberius was slain and his army totally defeated.

"The fainting Romans quit their ground,
Their trumpets languish in the sound,
They fly, they fly, they fly, they fly;
Victoria! Victoria! the bold Britons cry."—DRYDEN.

Arthur stayed in those parts till the next winter was over, and employed his time in restoring order and settling the government. He then returned into England and celebrated his victories with great splendor.

Then the king stablished all his knights, and to them that were not rich he gave lands, and charged them all never to do outrage nor murder, and always to flee treason; also, by no means to be cruel, but to give mercy unto him that asked mercy, upon pain of forfeiture of their worship and lordship; and always to do ladies, damosels and gentlewomen service upon pain of death. Also that no man take battle in a wrongful quarrel, for no law, nor for any world's goods. Unto this were all the knights sworn of the Table Round, both old and young. And at every year were they sworn at the high feast of Pentecost.

"And wide were through the world renowned
The glories of the Table Round.
Each knight who sought adventurer's fame,
To the bold court of Britain came.
And all who suffered causeless wrong
From tyrant proud or faitour strong,
Sought Arthur's presence to complain,
Nor there for aid implored in vain."—SCOTT.

King Arthur Slays the Giant of St. Michael's Mount.

While the army was encamped in Brittany, awaiting the arrival of the kings, there came a countryman to Arthur and told him that a giant, whose cave was on a neighboring mountain,

called St. Michael's Mount, had for a long time been accustomed to carry off the children of the peasants to devour them. "And now he hath taken the Duchess of Brittany as she rode with her attendants, and hath carried her away in spite of all they could do." "Now, fellow," said King Arthur, "canst thou bring me there where this giant haunteth?" "Yea, sure," said the good man; "lo, yonder where thou seest two great fires there shalt thou find him, and more treasure than I suppose is in all France beside." Then the king called to him Sir Bedver and Sir Kay, and commanded them to make ready horse and harness for himself and them; for after evening he would ride on pilgrimage to St. Michael's Mount.

So they three departed, and rode forth till they came to the foot of the mount. And there the king commanded them to tarry, for he would himself go up into that mount. So he ascended the hill till he came to a great fire, and there he found an aged woman sitting by a new-made grave, making great sorrow. Then King Arthur saluted her, and demanded of her wherefore she made such lamentations. To whom she answered: "Sir knight, speak low, for yonder is a devil, and if he hear thee speak he will come and destroy thee. For ye cannot make resistance to him, he is so fierce and so strong. He hath murdered the Duchess, which here lieth, who was the fairest of all the world, wife to Sir Hoel, Duke of Brittany." "Dame," said the king, "I come from the noble conqueror, King Arthur, to treat with that tyrant." "Fie on such treaties," said she; "he setteth not by the king, nor by no man else." "Well," said Arthur, "I will accomplish my message for all your fearful words." So he went forth by the crest of the hill, and saw where the giant sat at supper, gnawing on the limb of a man, and baking his broad limbs at the fire, and three fair damsels lying bound, whose lot it was to be devoured in their turn. When King Arthur beheld that, he had great compassion on them, so that his heart bled for sorrow. Then he hailed the giant, saying, "He that all the world ruleth give thee short life and shameful death. Why hast thou murdered this Duchess? Therefore come forth, thou caitiff, for this day thou shalt die by my hand."

"Come forth, thou villain, from thy lair,
This day shall be thy last."

Then the giant started up and took a great club, and smote at the king, and smote off his coronal; and then the king struck him with his sword, and made a fearful wound. Then the giant threw away his club and caught the king in his arms, so that he crushed his ribs. Then the three maidens kneeled down and prayed for help and comfort for Arthur. And Arthur weltered and wrenched, so that he was one while under and another time above. And so weltering and wallowing they rolled down the hill, and Arthur smote him with his dagger; and it fortuned they came to the place where the two knights were. And when they saw the king fast in the giant's arms they came and loosed him. Then the king commanded Sir Kay to smite off the giant's head, and to set it on the truncheon of a spear, and fix it on the barbican, that all the people might see and behold it. This was done, and anon it was known through all the country, wherefor the people came and thanked the king. And he said, "Give your thanks to God; and take ye the giant's spoil and divide it among you." And King Arthur caused a church to be builded on that hill in honor of St. Michael.

King Arthur Gets a Sword from the Lady of the Lake.

One day King Arthur rode forth, and on a sudden he was ware of three churls chasing Merlin to have slain him. And the king rode unto them and bade them flee. Then were they afraid when they saw a knight, and fled. "O Merlin," said Arthur, "here hadst thou been slain, for all thy crafts, had I not been by." "Nay," said Merlin, "not so, for I could save myself if I would; but thou art more near thy death than I am." So, as they went thus talking, King Arthur perceived where sat a knight on horseback, as if to guard the pass. "Sir knight," said Arthur, "for what cause abidest thou here?" Then the knight said, "There may no knight ride this way unless he just with me, for such is the custom of the pass." "I will amend that custom," said the king. Then they ran together, and they met so hard that their spears were shivered. Then they drew their swords and fought a strong battle, with many great strokes. But at length the sword of the knight smote King Arthur's sword in two pieces. Then said the knight unto Arthur, "Thou art

in my power, whether to save thee or slay thee, and unless thou yield thee as overcome and recreant, thou shalt die." "As for death," said King Arthur, "welcome be it when it cometh; but to yield me unto thee as recreant, I will not." Then he leapt upon the knight and threw him down; but the knight was a passing strong man, and anon he brought Arthur under him, and would have razed off his helm to slay him. Then said Merlin, "Knight, hold thy hand, for this knight is a man of more worship than thou art aware of." "Why, who is he?" said the knight. "It is King Arthur." Then would he have slain him for dread of his wrath, and lifted up his sword to slay him; and therewith Merlin cast an enchantment on the knight, so that he fell to the earth in a great sleep. Then Merlin took up King Arthur and set him on his horse. "Alas!" said Arthur, "what hast thou done, Merlin? hast thou slain this good knight by thy crafts?" "Care ye not," said Merlin; "he is wholer than ye be. He is only asleep, and will wake in three hours."

Then the king and he departed, and went till they came to a hermit, that was a good man and a great leech. So the hermit searched all his wounds and applied good salves; and the king was there three days, and then were his wounds well amended, that he might ride and go. So they departed, and as they rode Arthur said, "I have no sword." "No matter," said Merlin; "hereby is a sword that shall be yours." So they rode till they came to a lake, which was a fair water and broad. And in the midst of the lake Arthur was aware of an arm clothed in white samite, that held a fair sword in the hand. "Lo!" said Merlin, "yonder is that sword that I spake of. It belongeth to the Lady of the Lake, and, if she will, thou mayest take it; but if she will not, it will not be in thy power to take it."

So Sir Arthur and Merlin alighted from their horses and went into a boat. And when they came to the sword that the hand held, Sir Arthur took it by the handle and took it to him, and the arm and the hand went under the water:

> "And Arthur row'd across and took it,—rich
> With jewels, elfin Urim, on the hilt,
> Bewildering heart and eye,—the blade so bright
> That men are blinded by it,—on one side,
> Graven in the oldest tongue of all this world,

'Take me,' but turn the blade and you shall see,
And written in the speech ye speak yourself,
'Cast me away!' and sad was Arthur's face
Taking it, but old Merlin counsell'd him,
'Take thou and strike! the time to cast away
Is yet far off.' "—COMING OF ARTHUR.

Then they returned into the land and rode forth. And Sir Arthur looked on the sword and liked it right well.

So they rode unto Caerleon, whereof his knights were passing glad. And when they heard of his adventures, they marvelled that he would jeopard his person so alone. But all men of worship said it was a fine thing to be under such a chieftain as would put his person in adventure as other poor knights did.

CHAPTER VI.

Ga'wain—Tor—Pel'le-nore and their Strange Adventures.

Ga'wain's Adventure.

At the marriage of King Arthur the seats about the table were blessed by the Archbishop of Canterbury with great ceremony. When this had been done Merlin said, "Fair sirs, ye must all arise and come unto King Arthur and do him honor, after which ye will have the better wills to enjoy the feast." And so they arose to do him homage.

After they had gone Merlin found stamped upon every seat in letters of gold the name of its knightly occupant, all but two, these were vacant. Young Gawain hearing of this went to the king and asked that he might be made a knight. "I will do it with a good will," said the king, "and render you all the honor I may, for you are my sister's son." Tor had already been created a knight, so he and Gawain completed the number at Sir Arthur's table. In the midst of the feast Merlin astonished all the knights by assuring them that they were about to see "a strange and marvellous adventure." Just then a white hart came running into the hall pursued by a small white brachet.[1] These were followed by sixty black hounds. The hart, bitten by the brachet, leaped over the table and bounded through the door. A knight seized the brachet and rode away. Presently a lady came to the castle mounted upon a palfrey and claimed the brachet as hers.

Soon a strange knight appeared, and seizing the claimant,

[1] A small hound.

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carried her away by force. Sir Arthur at once organized a company to go in pursuit. Sir Gawain was to bring back the hart, Sir Tor the brachet, while King Pellenore was to rescue the lady and return her captor dead or alive. Sir Gawain followed the hart, lead on by the baying of the hounds, until he came to a great river. On the opposite side stood a knight who dared him to pursue the hart further. "Sir knight, come not over after the hart unless thou dost fight with me." Sir Gawain made his horse swim the river, and encountered the knight. "What is thy name?" said Gawain. "I am Allardin of the Isles," he replied. Sir Gawain smote him through the helmet and left him dead. He followed the hart unto a castle, where it was slain. A knight then came rushing out of the castle chamber, and killing Sir Gawain's hounds, set up a great lamentation. "O, my white hart, it repenteth me that thou art dead, for my sovereign lately gave thee to me, and evil have I kept thee." He then retired to his chamber and came forth armed to fight Sir Gawain. "What!" exclaimed Sir Gawain, "hast thou slain my hounds? I had rather ye had worked your anger upon me than these poor dumb beasts." "Thou sayest truth," replied the knight, "and so will I do to thee." Sir Gawain smote his foe to the earth, and when about to strke him dead, a lady from the castle threw herself upon his body and received the blow. Sir Gawain was filled with remorse. He spared the knight's life, and demanded that he repair to Camelot that King Arthur might know the truth. On his way he was set upon by four knights who wounded him sore, and only spared his life at the request of four ladies who came to his rescue. He was compelled to return to Camelot mounted on his horse and carrying the dead form of the lady whom he had slain. The king and the queen were much displeased, and made command that ever after he must espouse all ladies' quarrels, ever be courteous, and never refuse mercy to him that asked it.

Sir Tor's Adventure.

As Sir Tor rode from the castle he suddenly came upon a dwarf who smote his horse with his staff. "For what intent dost thou smite my horse?" said Sir Tor. "That thou should not pass this way until thou hast fought with the knights that

abide in yonder pavilions that thou seest," said the dwarf. Sir Tor looked and saw two great pavilions before which were great spears and shields, but he declared that he was on a pursuit and could not tarry. Thereupon the dwarf blew his horn and a knight immediately appeared upon horseback ready to give Sir Tor battle. Sir Tor smote him hard until he cried for mercy. "But, sir," he said, "I have another knight in yonder pavilion that will have adoe with you anon." "He shall be welcome," said Sir Tor. Sir Tor at once engaged him in battle until he, too, cried for mercy. The dwarf then came to Sir Tor and offered to show him where the knight with the white brachet lived. And so they rode through the forest until they came to two pavilions by a priory, before which were two shields, one of which was white and the other red. Sir Tor alighted, and entering one of the pavilions saw three ladies lying asleep. He then entered the other pavilion, where he saw a lady asleep with the brachet at her feet. The knight seized the brachet to bear it away. "What," said the lady, "will ye take my brachet from me?" "Yea," replied Sir Tor, "this brachet I have sought from Sir Arthur's court." The lady told him that he would yet regret what he had done. Sir Tor and the dwarf then set out for Camelot. The next day they were overtaken by a knight, who demanded that he return the brachet which he had taken from his lady. Sir Tor prepared to give him battle. He proved a valiant knight, and refused to yield, although at the mercy of Sir Tor. With that came a lady riding upon a palfrey and crying unto Sir Tor. "What will ye with me?" said the knight. "I beseech ye for King Arthur's love give me a gift." Sir Tor promised, and the lady asked the head of the knight at his feet. Sir Tor was sorry for his promise, but the lady insisted that he was a murderer and must die. Sir Tor hesitated until the knight attempted to escape, when he cleft his head in twain. He then returned to Camelot, and was welcomed with much joy at the castle.

King Pel'le-nore's Adventure.

As King Pellenore went out in obedience to Sir Arthur's command, he entered a forest, where he saw a damsel sitting by a well with a wounded knight by her side. "Help me, Sir Knight," she cried. The king told her that he was on a mission

and could not stop. A little further on he met a poor laboring man, and asked him if he had seen a knight riding and leading away a lady. The man told him he had, and they were just below in the valley. He told him further that the lady's cousin had challenged the knight to battle, and already they were fighting for her possession.

Sir Pellenore hastened to the scene, and there in a pavilion sat the damsel guarded by two squires. "Fair lady," he exclaimed, "ye must come with me to Sir Arthur's court." "Sir Knight," said the squires who were with her, "two knights fight for this lady; go and part them." "Ye say well," replied the king. So he rode between the knights and demanded to know the cause for which they fought. One said that she was his cousin, while the other declared that she belonged to him, as he had captured her at Sir Arthur's court. "That is truly said," replied Sir Pellenore, "and for that reason I have come to bear her thither again."

Sir Pellenore slew his antagonist, while the other knight gladly yielded his cousin to his care. So King Pellenore and the lady set out together for Camelot. But darkness coming on, they alighted, and prepared to wait for the morning. About midnight they heard the clattering of horses' hoofs. "Be still," said King Pellenore, "and we shall hear of some adventure."

Two knights, one from Camelot and the other from the north, approached each other. "What tidings at Camelot?" said one. "By my head," replied the other, "I have been and espied the court of King Arthur, and am going to the north to tell our chieftains of his fellowship and cheer." "And I," said the other, "have a remedy. This is the greatest poison in the world, and to Camelot I will with it, for I have a friend near to the king who has promised our chieftains that he shall secure it." "Beware," said the other, "of Merlin; he knows all things by the craft of Satan." The next day Sir Pellenore and the damsel came to the well where the young lady implored help for the wounded knight. To his grief he discovered that they had been eaten by lions, all save the lady's head. "Alas!" said Sir Pellenore, "her life I might have saved. I wot not but my heart mourneth sore for the death of this lady." "Now

shall ye do as I advise," said his companion. "Bury this knight in a hermitage and bear this young lady's head to the court of Sir Arthur." This Sir Pellenore did. When he returned to Camelot he was sworn upon the four Evangelists to tell the truth of his adventures. "Ah, Sir Pellenore," said the queen, "ye are greatly to blame that ye saved not the lady's life."

"Madam," replied Sir Pellenore, "I was so furious in my quest that I would not abide, and repenteth me all the days of my life." "True," said Merlin, "ye ought to repent it, for that lady was your own daughter and the knight was her lover. His name was Miles of the Launds, and hers was Elaine. And because ye failed to help her, ye shall see your best friend fail you when in your greatest distress." "I believe it will be so," said Sir Pellenore, "but God may well order our destinies."

And so the lady, the hart and the brachet were all returned to Sir Arthur's court, and he gave his knights great riches, and enjoined them, on the penalty of the loss of their knighthood, that they should always be courteous to the ladies and fight no battles on behalf of injustice or wrong. And every year they were sworn at Pentecost to abide his authority.

"And not a knight of Arthur's host,
Save that he trod some foreign coast,
But at this feast of Pentecost
Before him must appear."—SCOTT.

CHAPTER VII.

Sir Ga'wain—Sir Ga'wain's Marriage—Ca-ra'doc Briefbras or Ca-ra'doc with the Shrunken Arm—The Boy and the Mantle.

Sir Gawain.

Sir Gawain, as we have seen, was nephew to King Arthur, by his sister Morgana, married to Lot, king of Orkney, who was by Arthur made king of Norway. Sir Gawain was one of the most famous knights of the Round Table, and is characterized by the romancers as the sage and courteous Gawain. His brothers were Agravain, Gaharet, and Gareth.

Sir Gawain's Marriage.

Once upon a time King Arthur held his court in merry Carlisle, when a damsel came before him and craved a boon. It was for vengeance upon a caitiff knight, who had made her lover captive and despoiled her of her lands.

"When wine and mirth did most abound,
And harpers played their blithest round,
A shrilly trumpet shook the ground,
And marshals cleaved the ring.
A maiden on a palfrey white
Heading a band of damsels bright,
Paced through the circle to alight
And kneel before the king.
Faltering, yet gracefully, she said,
'Great Prince! behold an orphan maid,

In her departed mother's name,
A father's vowed protection claim.'
At once the king the suppliant raised,
And kissed her brow her beauty praised.
His vow he said should well be kept,
Ere in the sea the sun was dipped."—SCOTT.

King Arthur commanded to bring him his sword, Excalibur, and to saddle his steed, and rode forth without delay to right the lady's wrong. Erelong he reached the castle of the grim baron, and challenged him to the conflict. But the castle stood on magic ground, and the spell was such that no knight could tread thereon but straight his courage fell and his strength decayed. King Arthur felt the charm, and before a blow was struck, his sturdy limbs lost their strength, and his head grew faint. He was fain to yield himself prisoner to the churlish knight, who refused to release him except upon condition that he should return at the end of a year, and bring a true answer to the question,

"And he rode east, and he rode west,
And did of all enquire,
What thing it is all women crave,
And what they most desire."—PERCY'S RELIQUES.

In default of an answer he should surrender himself and his lands. King Arthur accepted the terms, and gave his oath to return at the time appointed. During the year the king rode east, and he rode west, and inquired of all whom he met what thing it is which all women most desire. Some told him riches; some, pomp and state; some, mirth; some, flattery; and some, a gallant knight. But in the diversity of answers he could find no sure dependence. The year was well nigh spent, when one day, as he rode thoughtfully through a forest, he saw sitting beneath a tree a lady of such hideous aspect that he turned away his eyes, and when she greeted him in seemly sort, made no answer. "What wight art thou," the lady said, "that will not speak to me? It may chance that I may resolve thy doubts, though I be not fair of aspect." "If thou wilt do so," said King Arthur, "choose what reward thou wilt, thou grim lady, and it shall be given thee." "Swear me this upon thy faith," she said, and

Arthur swore it. Then the lady told him the secret, and demanded her reward, which was that the king should find some fair and courtly knight to be her husband.

King Arthur hastened to the grim baron's castle and told him one by one all the answers which he had received from his various advisers, except the last, and not one was admitted as the true one. "Now yield thee, Arthur," the giant said, "for thou hast not paid thy ransom, and thou and thy lands are forfeited to me." Then King Arthur said:

"Yet hold thy hand, thou proud baron,
I pray thee hold thy hand,
And give me leave to speak once more
In rescue of my land.
This morn, as I came over a moor,
I saw a lady set,
Between an oak and a green holly,
All clad in red scarlett.
She says all women would have their will—
This is their chief desire;
Now yield, as thou art a baron true,
That I have paid my hire."

"It was my sister that told thee this," the churlish baron exclaimed. "Vengeance light on her! I will some time or other do her as ill a turn."

King Arthur rode homeward, but not light of heart; for he remembered the promise he was under to the loathly lady to give her one of his young and gallant knights for a husband. He told his grief to Sir Gawain, his nephew, and he replied, "Be not sad, my lord, for I will marry the loathly lady." King Arthur replied:

"Now nay, now nay, good Sir Gawaine,
My sister's son ye be;
The loathly lady 's all too grim,
And all too foule for thee."

But Gawain persisted, and the king at last, with sorrow of heart, consented that Gawain should be his ransom. So, one day, the king and his knights rode to the forest, met the loathly lady, and brought her to the court. Sir Gawain stood the scoffs

and jeers of his companions as he best might, and the marriage was solemnized, but not with the usual festivities.

> "There was no joye ne feste at alle;
> There n'as but hevinesse and mochel sorwe,
> For prively he wed her on the morwe,
> And all day after hid him as an owle,
> So wo was him his wife loked so foule!"—CHAUCER.

When night came, and they were alone together, Sir Gawain could not conceal his aversion; and the lady asked him why he sighed so heavily and turned away his face. He candidly confessed it was on account of three things—her age, her ugliness, and her low degree. The lady, not at all offended, replied with excellent arguments to all his objections. She showed him that with age is discretion, with ugliness security from rivals, and that all true gentility depends, not upon the accident of birth, but upon the character of the individual.

Sir Gawain made no reply; but, turning his eyes on his bride, what was his amazement to perceive that she wore no longer the unseemly aspect that had so distressed him. She then told him that the form she had worn was not her true form, but a disguise imposed upon her by a wicked enchanter, and that she was condemned to wear it until two things should happen: one, that she should obtain some young and gallant knight to be her husband. This having been done, one half of the charm was removed. She was now at liberty to wear her true form for half the time, and she bade him choose whether he would have her fair by day and ugly by night, or the reverse:

> "Now gentle Gawain choose, saith she,
> And make the choice with care,
> Whether by night or else by day
> Shall I be foul or fair."—PERCY'S RELIQUES.

Sir Gawain would fain have had her look her best by night, when he alone should see her, and show her repulsive visage, if at all, to others. But she reminded him how much more pleasant it would be to her to wear her best looks in the throng of knights and ladies by day. Sir Gawain yielded, and gave up his will to hers. This alone was wanting to dissolve the charm. The

lovely lady now with joy assured him that she should change no more; but as she now was, so would she remain by night as well as by day.

"Sweet blushes stayned her rud-red cheek,
Her eyen were black as sloe,
The ripening cherrye swelled her lippe,
And all her neck was snow.
Sir Gawain kist that ladye faire
Lying upon the sheete,
And swore, as he was a true knight,
The spice was never so swete."

Sir Gawain, accompanied by his bride, returned to Camelot, and in all the kingdom there was no knight happier than he.

The dissolution of the charm which had held the lady also released her brother, the grim baron, for he, too, had been implicated in it. He ceased to be a churlish oppressor, and became a gallant and generous knight as any at Arthur's court:

"With so high reverence and observance,
As well in speeche as in contenance,
That Gawain, with his olde curtesie,
Though he were come agen out of faërie,
Ne coude him not amenden with a word."—CHAUCER.

Ca-ra'doc Brief-Bras; or, Ca-ra'doc with the Shrunken Arm.

Caradoc was the son of Ysenne, the beautiful niece of Arthur. He was ignorant who his father was till it was discovered in the following manner: When the youth was of proper years to receive the honors of knighthood, King Arthur held a grand court for the purpose of knighting him. On this occasion a strange knight presented himself, and challenged the knights of Arthur's court to exchange blow for blow with him. His proposal was this: to lay his neck on a block for any knight to strike, on condition that, if he survived the blow, the knight should submit in turn to the same experiment. Sir Kay, who was usually ready to accept all challenges, pronounced this wholly unreasonable, and declared that he would not accept it for all the wealth in the world. And when the knight offered his sword, with which

the operation was to be performed, no person ventured to accept it, till Caradoc, growing angry at the disgrace which was thus incurred by the Round Table, threw aside his mantle and took it. "Do you do this as one of the best knights?" said the stranger. "No," he replied, "but as one of the most foolish." The stranger lays his head upon the block, receives a blow which sends it rolling from his shoulders, walks after it, picks it up, replaces it with great success, and says he will return when the court shall be assembled next year, and claim his turn. When the anniversary arrived, both parties were punctual to their engagement. Great entreaties were used by the king and queen, and the whole court, in behalf of Caradoc, but the stranger was inflexible. The young knight laid his head upon the block, and more than once desired him to make an end of the business, and not keep him longer in so disagreeable a state of expectation. At last the stranger strikes him gently with the side of the sword, bids him rise, and reveals to him the fact that he is his father, the enchanter Eliaures, and that he gladly owns him for a son, having proved his courage and fidelity to his word.

But the favor of enchanters is short-lived and uncertain. Eliaures fell under the influence of a wicked woman, who, to satisfy her pique against Caradoc, persuaded the enchanter to fasten on his arm a serpent, which remained there sucking at his flesh and blood, no human skill sufficing either to remove the reptile or alleviate the torments which Caradoc endured.

Caradoc was betrothed to Guimier, sister to his bosom friend Cador, and daughter to the King of Cornwall. As soon as they were informed of his deplorable condition, they set out for Nantes, where Caradoc's castle was, that Guimier might attend upon him. When Caradoc heard of their coming, his first emotion was that of joy and love. But soon he began to fear that the sight of his emaciated form, and of his sufferings, would disgust Guimier; and this apprehension became so strong that he departed secretly from Nantes, and hid himself in a hermitage. He was sought far and near by the knights of Arthur's court, and Cador made a vow never to desist from the quest till he should have found him. After long wandering, Cador discovered his friend in the hermitage, reduced almost to a skeleton, and apparently near his death. All other means of relief having already

been tried in vain, Cador at last prevailed on the enchanter Eliaures to disclose the only method which could avail for his rescue. A maiden must be found, his equal in birth and beauty, and loving him better than herself, so that she would expose herself to the same torment to deliver him. Two vessels were then to be provided, the one filled with sour wine and the other with milk. Caradoc must enter the first, so that the wine should reach his neck, and the maiden must get into the other, and, exposing her bosom upon the edge of the vessel, invite the serpent to forsake the withered flesh of his victim for this fresh and inviting food. The vessels were to be placed three feet apart, and as the serpent crossed from one to the other, a knight was to cut him in two. If he failed in his blow, Caradoc would indeed be delivered, but it would be only to see his fair champion suffering the same cruel and hopeless torment. The sequel may be easily foreseen. Guimier willingly exposed herself to the perilous adventure, and Cador, with a lucky blow, killed the serpent. The arm, in which Caradoc had suffered so long, recovered its strength, but not its shape, in consequence of which he was called Caradoc Brief-Bras, Caradoc of the Shrunken Arm.

Caradoc and Guimier are the hero and heroine of the ballad of the "Boy and the Mantle."

The Boy and the Mantle.

A boy is said to have appeared at the court of King Arthur with a magic mantle. No lady could wear it whose life was not blameless. One after another put it on only to see it shrink to nothing.

"And first came Lady Guinevere,
The mantle she must try.
This dame she was new-fangled
And of a roving eye.

"When she had taken the mantle,
And all with it was clad,
From top to toe it shivered down,
As though with shears beshred.

"Down she threw the mantle,
No longer would she stay;
But, storming like a fury,
To her chamber flung away.

"Sir Kay called forth his lady,
And bade her to come near:
'Yet dame, if thou be guilty,
I pray thee now forbear.'

"Down she threw the mantle,
No longer bold or gay,
But, with a face all pale and wan,
To her chamber slunk away.

"Then forth came an old knight
A pattering o'er his creed,
And proffered to the little boy
Five nobles to his meed:

"A saint his lady seemed,
With step demure and slow,
And gravely to the mantle
With mincing face doth go.

"Ah! little did her mincing,
Or his long prayers bestead;
She had no more hung on her
Than a tassel and a thread.

"Sir Cradock called his lady,
And bade her to come near:
'Come win this mantle, lady,
And do me credit here.'

"'Lie still,' she cried, 'O mantle!
And shame me not for naught;
I'll freely own whate'er amiss
Or blameful I have wrought.

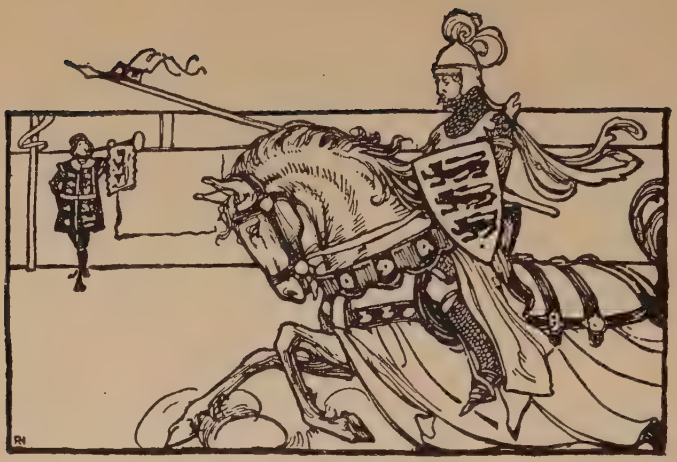
"'Once I kissed Sir Cradock
Beneath the greenwood tree;
Once I kissed Sir Cradock's mouth,
Before he married me.'

"When she had thus her shriven,
And her worst fault had told,
The mantle soon became her,
Right comely as it should.

"Most rich and fair of color,
Like gold it glittering shone,
And much the knights in Arthur's court
Admired her every one."

The ballad goes on to tell of two more trials of a similar kind, made by means of a boar's head and a drinking-horn, in both of which the result was equally favorable with the first to Sir Cradock and his lady. It then concludes as follows :

"Thus boar's head, horn, and mantle
Were this fair couple's meed ;
And all such constant lovers,
God send them well to speed."
—PERCY'S RELIQUES.



CHAPTER VIII.

Birth of Laun'ce-lot—Sir Laun'ce-lot of the Lake.

Birth of Laun'ce-lot.

King Ban, of Brittany, the faithful ally of Arthur, was attacked by his enemy Claudas, and, after a long war, saw himself reduced to the possession of a single fortress, where he was besieged by his enemy. In this extremity he determined to solicit the assistance of Arthur, and escaped in a dark night with his wife Helen and his infant son Launcelot, leaving his castle in the hands of his seneschal, who immediately surrendered the place to Claudas. The flames of his burning citadel reached the eyes of the unfortunate monarch during his flight, and he expired with grief. The wretched Helen, leaving her child on the brink of a lake, flew to receive the last sighs of her husband, and on returning perceived the little Launcelot in the arms of a nymph, who, on the approach of the queen, threw herself into the lake with the child. This nymph was Vivian, mistress of the enchanter Merlin, better known by the name of the Lady of the Lake. Launcelot received his appellation from having been educated at the court of this enchantress, whose palace was situated in the midst, not of a real, but, like the appearance which deceives the African traveller, of an imaginary lake, whose deluding resemblance served as a barrier to her residence. Here she dwelt not

alone, but in the midst of a numerous retinue, and a splendid court of knights and damsels.

The queen, after her double loss, retired to a convent, where she was joined by the widow of Bohort, for this good king had died of grief on hearing of the death of his brother Ban. His two sons, Lionel and Bohort, were rescued by a faithful knight, and arrived in the shape of greyhounds at the palace of the lake, where, having resumed their natural form, they were educated along with their cousin Launcelot.

The fairy, when her pupil had attained the age of eighteen, conveyed him to the court of Arthur, for the purpose of demanding his admission to the honor of knighthood; and at the first appearance of the youthful candidate, the graces of his person, which were not inferior to his courage and skill in arms, made an instantaneous and indelible impression on the heart of Guinevere, while her charms inspired him with an equally ardent and constant passion. The mutual attachment of these lovers exerted, from that time forth, an influence over the whole history of Arthur. For the sake of Guinevere, Launcelot achieved the conquest of Northumberland, defeated Gallehaut, King of the Marches, who afterwards became his most faithful friend and ally, exposed himself in numberless encounters, and brought hosts of prisoners to the feet of his sovereign.

Sir Laun'ce-lot of the Lake.

After King Arthur was come from Rome into England, all the knights of the Table Round resorted unto him, and made him many justs and tournaments. And in especial Sir Launcelot of the Lake, in all tournaments and justs and deeds of arms, both for life and death, passed all other knights, and was never overcome, except it were by treason or enchantment; and he increased marvellously in worship, wherefore Queen Guinevere had him in great favor above all other knights:

"Then, in the boyhood of the year,
Sir Launcelot and Queen Guinevere
Rode thro' the coverts of the deer,
With blissful treble ringing clear.
She seem'd a part of joyous Spring:
A gown of grass-green silk she wore,

Buckled with golden clasps before ;
A light-green tuft of plumes she bore
Closed in a golden ring.

"Sometimes the linnet piped his song :
Sometimes the throstle whistled strong :
Sometimes the sparhawk, wheel'd along,
Hush'd all the groves from fear of wrong :
By grassy capes with fuller sound
In curves the yellowing river ran,
And drooping chestnut-buds began
To spread into the perfect fan,
Above the teeming ground.

"Now on some twisted ivy-net,
Now by some tinkling rivulet,
In mosses mixt with violet
Her cream-white mule his pastern set :
And fleeter now she skimm'd the plains
Than she whose elfin prancer springs
By night to eery warblings,
When all the glimmering moorland rings
With jingling bridle-reins.

"As she fled fast thro' sun and shade,
The happy winds upon her play'd,
Blowing the ringlet from the braid :
She look'd so lovely, as she sway'd
The rein with dainty finger-tips,
A man had given all other bliss,
And all his worldly worth for this,
To waste his whole heart in one kiss
Upon her perfect lips."

—Sir Launcelot and Queen Guinevere.

And for certain he loved the queen again above all other ladies ; and for her he did many deeds of arms, and saved her from peril, through his noble chivalry. Thus Sir Launcelot rested him long with play and game, and then he thought to prove himself in strange adventures ; so he bade his nephew, Sir Lionel, to make him ready,—"for we two will seek adventures." So they mounted on their horses, armed at all sights, and rode into a forest, and so into a deep plain. And the weather was hot about noon, and Sir Launcelot had great desire to sleep. Then Sir Lionel espied a great apple-tree that stood by a hedge, and he said : "Brother, yonder is a fair shadow,—there may we rest

us and our horses." "It is well said," replied Sir Launcelot. So they there alighted, and Sir Launcelot laid him down, and his helm under his head, and soon was asleep passing fast. And Sir Lionel waked while he slept. And presently there came three knights riding as fast as ever they might ride, and there followed them but one knight. And Sir Lionel thought he never saw so great a knight before. So within a while this great knight overtook one of these knights, and smote him so that he fell to the earth. Then he rode to the second knight and smote him, and so he did to the third knight. Then he alighted down, and bound all the three knights fast with their own bridles. When Sir Lionel saw him do thus, he thought to assay him, and made him ready silently, not to awake Sir Launcelot, and rode after the strong knight, and bade him turn. And the other smote Sir Lionel so hard that horse and man fell to the earth; and then he alighted down and bound Sir Lionel, and threw him across his own horse; and so he served them all four, and rode with them away to his own castle. And when he came there he put them in a deep prison, in which were many more knights in great distress.

Now while Sir Launcelot lay under the apple-tree sleeping, there came by him four queens of great estate. And that the heat should not grieve them, there rode four knight about them, and bare a cloth of green silk, on four spears, betwixt them and the sun. And the queens rode on four white mules.

Thus as they rode they heard by them a great horse grimly neigh. Then they were aware of a sleeping knight, that lay all armed under an apple-tree; and as the queens looked on his face they knew it was Sir Launcelot. Then they began to strive for that knight, and each one said she would have him for her love. "We will not strive," said Morgane le Fay, that was King Arthur's sister, "for I will put an enchantment upon him, that he shall not wake for six hours, and we will take him away to my castle; and then when he is surely within my hold, I will take the enchantment from him, and then let him choose which of us he will have for his love." So the enchantment was cast upon Sir Launcelot. And then they laid him upon his shield, and bare him so on horseback between two knights, and brought him unto the castle and laid him in a chamber, and at night they sent him his supper.

And on the morning came early those four queens, richly dight, and bade him good morning, and he them again. "Sir knight," they said, "thou must understand thou art our prisoner; and we know thee well, that thou art Sir Launcelot of the Lake, King Ban's son, and that thou art the noblest knight living. And we know well that there can no lady have thy love but one, and that is Queen Guinevere; and now thou shalt lose her for ever, and she thee; and therefore it behooveth thee now to choose one of us. I am the Queen Morgane le Fay, and here is the Queen of North Wales, and the Queen of Eastland, and the Queen of the Isles. Now choose one of us which thou wilt have, for if thou choose not, in this prison thou shalt die." "This is a hard case," said Sir Launcelot, "that either I must die, or else choose one of you; yet had I liever to die in this prison with worship, than to have one of you for my paramour, for ye be false enchantresses." "Well," said the queens, "is this your answer, that ye will refuse us?" "Yea, on my life it is," said Sir Launcelot. Then they departed, making great sorrow.

Then at noon came a damsel unto him with his dinner, and asked him, "What cheer?" "Truly, fair damsel," said Sir Launcelot, "never so ill." "Sir," said she, "if you will be ruled by me, I will help you out of this distress. If ye will promise me to help my father on Tuesday next, who hath made a tournament between him and the King of North Wales; for the last Tuesday my father lost the field." "Fair maiden," said Sir Launcelot, "tell me what is your father's name, and then I will give you an answer." "Sir knight," she said, "my father is King Bagdemagus." "I know him well," said Sir Launcelot, "for a noble king and a good knight; and, by the faith of my body, I will be ready to do your father and you service at that day."

So she departed, and came on the next morning early and found him ready, and brought him out of twelve locks, and brought him to his own horse, and lightly he saddled him, and so rode forth.

And on the Tuesday next he came to a little wood where the tournament should be. And there were scaffolds and holds, that lords and ladies might look on, and give the prize. Then came into the field the King of North Wales, with eightscore helms, and

King Bagdemagus came with fourscore helms. And then they couched their spears, and came together with a great dash, and there were overthrown at the first encounter twelve of King Bagdemagus's party and six of the King of North Wales's party, and King Bagdemagus's party had the worse.

With that came Sir Launcelot of the Lake, and thrust in with his spear in the thickest of the press; and he smote down five knights ere he held his hand; and he smote down the King of North Wales, and he brake his thigh in that fall. And then the knights of the King of North Wales would just no more; and so the gree was given to King Bagdemagus.

And Sir Launcelot rode forth with King Bagdemagus unto his castle; and there he had passing good cheer, both with the king and with his daughter. And on the morn he took his leave, and told the king he would go and seek his brother, Sir Lionel, that went from him when he slept. So he departed, and by adventure he came to the same forest where he was taken sleeping. And in the highway he met a damsel riding on a white palfrey, and they saluted each other. "Fair damsel," said Sir Launcelot, "know ye in this country any adventures?"

> "He armèd rode in forest wide,
> And met a damsel fair,
> Who told him of adventures great,
> Wherein he gave good care."—PERCY'S RELIQUES.

"Sir knight," said the damsel, "here are adventures near at hand, if thou durst pursue them." "Why should I not prove adventures?" said Sir Launcelot, "since for that cause came I hither." "Sir," said she, "hereby dwelleth a knight that will not be overmatched for any man I know, except thou overmatch him. His name is Sir Turquine, and, as I understand, he is a deadly enemy of King Arthur, and he has in his prison good knights of Arthur's court threescore and more, that he hath won with his own hands."

> "Who has in prison threescore knights
> And four, that he did wound;
> Knights of King Arthur's court they be,
> And of his Table Round."—PERCY'S RELIQUES.

"Damsel," said Launcelot, "I pray you bring me unto this knight." So she told him, "Hereby, within this mile, is his castle, and by it on the left hand is a ford for horses to drink of, and over that ford there groweth a fair tree, and on that tree hang many shields that good knights wielded aforetime, that are now prisoners; and on the tree hangeth a basin of copper and latten, and if thou strike upon that basin thou shalt hear tidings." And Sir Launcelot departed, and rode as the damsel had shown him, and shortly he came to the ford, and the tree where hung the shields and the basin. And among the shields he saw Sir Lionel's and Sir Hector's shield, besides many others of knights that he knew.

Then Sir Launcelot struck on the basin with the butt of his spear; and long he did so, but he saw no man. And at length he was ware of a great knight that drove a horse before him, and across the horse there lay an armed knight bounden.

"He struck hard, the basin broke,
And Turquine soon he spied."—PERCY'S RELIQUES.

And as they came near, Sir Launcelot thought he should know the captive knight. Then Sir Launcelot saw that it was Sir Gaheris, Sir Gawain's brother, a knight of the Table Round. "Now, fair knight," said Sir Launcelot, "put that wounded knight off the horse, and let him rest awhile, and let us two prove our strength. For, as it is told me, thou hast done great despite and shame unto knights of the Round Table, therefore now defend thee." "If thou be of the Table Round," said Sir Turquine, "I defy thee and all thy fellowship."

"If thou be Launcelot du Lake,
Then welcome shall thou be,
Wherefore see thou thyself defend,
For now defie I thee."—PERCY'S RELIQUES.

"That is overmuch said," said Sir Launcelot.

Then they put their spears in the rests, and came together with their horses as fast as they might run. And each smote the other in the middle of their shields, so that their horses fell under them, and the knights were both staggered; and as soon as they could clear their horses, they drew out their swords and

came together eagerly, and each gave the other many strong strokes, for neither shield nor harness might withstand their strokes. So within a while both had grimly wounds, and bled grievously. Then at the last they were breathless both, and stood leaning upon their swords. "Now, fellow," said Sir Turquine, "thou art the stoutest man that ever I met with, and best breathed; and so be it thou be not the knight that I hate above all other knights, the knight that slew my brother, Sir Carados, I will gladly accord with thee; and for thy love I will deliver all the prisoners that I have."

"What knight is he that thou hatest so above others?" "Truly," said Sir Turquine, "his name is Sir Launcelot of the Lake." "I am Sir Launcelot of the Lake, King Ban's son of Benwick, and very knight of the Table Round; and now I defy thee do thy best." "Ah! said Sir Turquine, "Launcelot, thou art to me the most welcome that ever was knight; for we shall never part till the one of us be dead." And then they hurtled together like two wild bulls, rashing and lashing with their swords and shields, so that sometimes they fell, as it were, headlong. Thus they fought two hours and more, till the ground where they fought was all bepurpled with blood.

"But soon too earnest grew their game,
The spears drew blood, the swords struck flame,
And horse and men to ground there came—
Knights who shall rise no more.
Gone was the pride the war that graced,
Gay shields were cleft and crests defaced,
And steel coats riven and helms unbraced,
And pennons streamed with gore.
Gone, too, were fence and fair array,
And desperate strength made deadly way
At random through the bloody fray,
And blows were dealt with headlong sway,
Unheeding where they fell."—SCOTT.

Then at the last Sir Turquine waxed sore faint, and gave somewhat aback, and bare his shield full low for weariness. That spied Sir Launcelot, and leapt then upon him fiercely as a lion, and took him by the beaver of his helmet, and drew him down on his knees. And he rased off his helm, and smote his neck in sunder.

And Sir Gaheris, when he saw Sir Turquine slain, said, "Fair lord, I pray you tell me your name, for this day I say ye are the best knight in the world, for ye have slain this day in my sight the mightiest man and the best knight except you that ever I saw." "Sir, my name is Sir Launcelot du Lac, that ought to help you of right for King Arthur's sake, and in especial for Sir Gawain's sake, your own dear brother. Now I pray you, that ye go into yonder castle, and set free all the prisoners ye find there, for I am sure ye shall find there many knights of the Table Round, and especially my brother Sir Lionel. I pray you greet them all from me, and tell them I bid them take there such stuff as they find; and tell my brother to go unto the court and abide me there, for by the feast of Pentecost, I think to be there; but at this time I may not stop, for I have adventures on hand." So he departed, and Sir Gaheris rode into the castle, and took the keys from the porter, and hastily opened the prison door and let out all the prisoners. There was Sir Kay, Sir Brandeles, and Sir Galynde, Sir Bryan, and Sir Alyduke, Sir Hector de Marys, and Sir Lionel, and many more.

"From prison threescore knights and four
Deliverest every one."—PERCY'S RELIQUES.

And when they saw Sir Gaheris, they all thanked him, for they thought, because he was wounded, that he had slain Sir Turquine. "Not so," said Sir Gaheris; "it was Sir Launcelot that slew him, right worshipfully; I saw it with mine eyes."

Sir Launcelot rode till at nightfall he came to a fair castle, and therein he found an old gentlewoman, who lodged him with good-will, and there he had good cheer for him and his horse. And when time was, his host brought him to a fair chamber over the gate to his bed. Then Sir Launcelot unarmed him, and set his harness by him, and went to bed, and anon he fell asleep. And soon after there came one on horseback and knocked at the gate in great haste; and when Sir Launcelot heard this, he arose and looked out of the window, and saw by the moonlight three knights riding after that one man, and all three lashed on him with their swords, and that one knight turned on them knightly again and defended himself. "Truly," said Sir Launcelot, "yonder one knight will I help, for it is shame to see three

knights on one." Then he took his harness and went out at the window by a sheet down to the four knights; and he said aloud, "Turn you knights unto me, and leave your fighting with that knight." Then the knights left Sir Kay, for it was he they were upon, and turned unto Sir Launcelot, and struck many great strokes at Sir Launcelot, and assailed him on every side. Then Sir Kay addressed him to help Sir Launcelot, but he said, "Nay, sir, I will have none of your help; let me alone with them." So Sir Kay suffered him to do his will, and stood one side. And within six strokes, Sir Launcelot had stricken them down.

Then they all cried, "Sir knight, we yield us unto you." "As to that," said Sir Launcelot, "I will not take your yielding unto me. If so be ye will yield you unto Sir Kay, the Seneschal, I will save your lives, but else not." "Fair knight," then they said, "we will do as thou commandest us." "Then shall ye," said Sir Launcelot, "on Whitsunday next, go into the court of King Arthur, and there shall ye yield you unto Queen Guinevere, and say that Sir Kay sent you thither to be her prisoners." "Sir," they said, "it shall be done, by the faith of our bodies;" and then they swore, every knight upon his sword. And so Sir Launcelot suffered them to depart.

On the morn Sir Launcelot rose early and left Sir Kay sleeping; and Sir Launcelot took Sir Kay's armor, and his shield, and armed him, and went to the stable and took his horse, and so he departed. Then soon after arose Sir Kay, and missed Sir Launcelot. And then he espied that he had taken his armor and his horse. "Now, by my faith, I know well," said Sir Kay, "that he will grieve some of King Arthur's knights, for they will deem that it is I, and will be bold to meet him. But by cause of his armor I am sure I shall ride in peace." Then Sir Kay thanked his host and departed.

Sir Launcelot rode in a deep forest, and there he saw four knights under an oak, and they were of Arthur's court. There was Sir Sagramour le Desirus, and Hector de Marys, and Sir Gawain, and Sir Uwaine. As they spied Sir Launcelot, they judged by his arms it had been Sir Kay. "Now, by my faith," said Sir Sagramour, "I will prove Sir Kay's might"; and got his spear in his hand, and came toward Sir Launcelot. There-

with Sir Launcelot couched his spear against him, and smote Sir Sagramour so sore that horse and man fell both to the earth. Then said Sir Hector, "Now shall ye see what I may do with him." But he fared worse than Sir Sagramour, for Sir Launcelot's spear went through his shoulder and bare him from his horse to the ground. "By my faith," said Sir Uwaine, "yonder is a strong knight, and I fear he hath slain Sir Kay, and taken his armor." And therewith Sir Uwaine took his spear in hand and rode toward Sir Launcelot; and Sir Launcelot met him on the plain and gave him such a buffet that he was staggered, and wist not where he was. "Now see I well," said Sir Gawain, "that I must encounter with that knight." Then he adjusted his shield, and took a good spear in his hand, and Sir Launcelot knew him well. Then they let run their horses with all their mights, and each knight smote the other in the middle of his shield. But Sir Gawain's spear broke, and Sir Launcelot charged so sore upon him that his horse fell over backward. Then Sir Launcelot rode away smiling with himself, and he said, "Good luck be with him that made this spear, for never came a better into my hand." Then the four knights went each to the other and comforted one another. "What say ye to this adventure," said Sir Gawain, "that one spear hath felled us all four?" "I dare lay my head it is Sir Launcelot," said Sir Hector; "I know it by his riding."

And Sir Launcelot rode through many strange countries, till by fortune he came to a fair castle; and as he passed beyond the castle, he thought he heard two bells ring. And then he perceived how a falcon came flying over his head toward a high elm; and she had long lunys[1] about her feet, and she flew unto the elm to take her perch, and the lunys got tangled in a bough; and when she would have taken her flight, she hung by the legs fast, and Sir Launcelot saw how she hung, and beheld the fair falcon entangled, and he was sorry for her. Then came a lady out of the castle and cried aloud, "O Launcelot, Launcelot, as thou art the flower of all knights, help me to get my hawk; for if my hawk be lost, my lord will slay me, he is so hasty." "What is your lord's name?" said Sir Launcelot. "His name

[1] The string with which the falcon is held.

is Sir Phelot, a knight that belongeth to the King of North Wales." "Well, fair lady, since ye know my name, and require me of knighthood to help you, I will do what I may to get your hawk; and yet in truth I am an ill climber, and the tree is passing high, and few boughs to help me." And therewith Sir Launcelot alighted and tied his horse to the tree, and prayed the lady to unarm him. And when he was unarmed, he put off his jerkin, and with might and force he clomb up to the falcon, and tied the lunys to a rotten bough, and threw the hawk down with it; and the lady got the hawk in her hand. Then suddenly there came out of the castle her husband all armed, and with his naked sword in his hand, and said, "O, Knight Launcelot, now have I got thee as I would," and stood at the boll of the tree to slay him. "Ah, lady!" said Sir Launcelot, "why have ye betrayed me?" "She hath done," said Sir Phelot, "but as I commanded her; and therefore there is none other way but thine hour is come, and thou must die." "That were shame unto thee," said Sir Launcelot; "thou an armed knight to slay a naked man by treason." "Thou gettest none other grace," said Sir Phelot, "and therefore help thyself if thou canst." "Alas!" said Sir Launcelot, "that ever a knight should die weaponless." And therewith he turned his eyes upward and downward; and over his head he saw a big bough leafless, and he brake it off from the trunk. And then he came lower, and watched how his own horse stood; and suddenly he leapt on the further side of his horse from the knight. Then Sir Phelot lashed at him eagerly, meaning to have slain him. But Sir Launcelot put away the stroke, with the big bough, and smote Sir Phelot therewith on the side of the head, so that he fell down in a swoon to the ground. Then Sir Launcelot took his sword out of his hand and struck his head from the body. Then said the lady, "Alas! why hast thou slain my husband?" "I am not the cause," said Sir Launcelot, "for with falsehood ye would have slain me, and now it is fallen on yourselves." Thereupon Sir Launcelot got all his armor, and put it upon him hastily, for fear of more resort, for the knight's castle was so nigh. And as soon as he might, he took his horse and departed, and thanked God he had escaped that adventure.

And two days before the feast of Pentecost, Sir Launcelot

came home; and the king and all the court were passing glad of his coming. And when Sir Gawain, Sir Uwaine, Sir Sagramour, and Sir Hector de Marys saw Sir Launcelot in Sir Kay's armor, then they wist well it was he that smote them down, all with one spear. Then there was laughing and merriment among them; and from time to time came all the knights that Sir Turquine had prisoners, and they all honored and worshipped Sir Launcelot. Then Sir Gaheris said, "I saw all the battle from the beginning to the end," and he told King Arthur all how it was. Then Sir Kay told the king how Sir Launcelot had rescued him, and how he "made the knights yield to me, and not to him." And there they were, all three, and confirmed it all. "And, by my faith," said Sir Kay, "because Sir Launcelot took my harness and left me his, I rode in peace, and no man would have to do with me."

And so at that time Sir Launcelot had the greatest name of any knight of the world, and most was he honored of high and low.

The mixed character of Sir Launcelot runs all through his life. He was the incarnation of right and wrong.

A princely knight,
Whose blended life brought weal and woe
Unto his king.

CHAPTER IX.

The Adventure of the Cart.

It befell in the month of May, Queen Guinevere called to her knights of the Table Round, and gave them warning that early upon the morrow she would ride a maying into the woods and fields beside Westminster; "and I warn you that there be none of you but he be well horsed, and that ye all be clothed in green, either silk or cloth; and I shall bring with me ten ladies, and every knight shall have a lady behind him, and every knight shall have a squire and two yeomen, and all well horsed:"

> "For thus it chanced one morn when all the court,
> Green-suited, but with plumes that mock'd the May,
> Had been, their wont, a-maying."—Guinevere.

So upon the morn they took their horses with the queen, and rode a-maying in woods and meadows, as it pleased them, in great joy and delight. Now there was a knight named Maleagans, son to King Brademagus, who loved Queen Guinevere passing well, and so had he done long and many years. Now this knight, Sir Maleagans, learned the queen's purpose, and that she had no men of arms with her but the ten noble knights all arrayed in green for maying; so he prepared him twenty men of arms, and a hundred archers, to take captive the queen and her knights:

> "In the merry month of May,
> In a morn at break of day,
> With a troop of damsels playing,
> The Queen, forsooth, went forth a-maying."—Old Song.

So when the queen had mayed, and all were bedecked with herbs, mosses and flowers in the best manner and freshest, right then came out of a wood Sir Maleagans with eightscore men well harnessed, and bade the queen and her knights yield them prisoners. "Traitor knight," said Queen Guinevere, "what wilt thou do? Wilt thou shame thyself? Bethink thee how thou art a king's son, and a knight of the Table Round, and how thou art about to dishonor all knighthood and thyself." "Be it as it may," said Sir Maleagans, "know you well, madam, I have loved you many a year, and never till now could I get you to such advantage as I do now; and therefore I will take you as I find you." Then the ten knights of the Round Table drew their swords, and the other party run at them with their spears, and the ten knights manfully abode them, and smote away their spears. Then they lashed together with swords, till several were smitten to the earth. So when the queen saw her knights thus dolefully oppressed, and needs must be slain at the last, then for pity and sorrow she cried, "Sir Maleagans, slay not my noble knights and I will go with you, upon this covenant, that they be led with me wheresoever thou leadest me." "Madame," said Maleagans, "for your sake they shall be led with you into my own castle, if that ye will be ruled, and ride with me." Then Sir Maleagans charged them all that none should depart from the queen, for he dreaded lest Sir Launcelot should have knowledge of what had been done.

Then the queen privily called unto her a page of her chamber that was swiftly horsed, to whom she said, "Go thou when thou seest thy time, and bear this ring unto Sir Launcelot, and pray him as he loveth me that he will see me and rescue me. And spare not thy horse," said the queen, "neither for water nor for land." So the child espied his time, and lightly he took his horse with the spurs, and departed as fast as he might. And when Sir Maleagans saw him so flee, he understood that it was by the queen's commandment for to warn Sir Launcelot. Then they that were best horsed chased him, and shot at him, but the child went from them all. Then Sir Maleagans said to the queen, "Madam, ye are about to betray me, but I shall arrange for Sir Launcelot that he shall not come lightly at you." Then he rode with her and them all to his castle, in all the haste that

they might. And by the way Sir Maleagans laid in ambush the best archers that he had to wait for Sir Launcelot. And the child came to Westminster, and found Sir Launcelot, and told his message, and delivered him the queen's ring. "Alas!" said Sir Launcelot, "now am I shamed for ever, unless I may rescue that noble lady." Then eagerly he asked his armor, and put it on him, and mounted his horse and rode as fast as he might; and men say he took the water at Westminster Bridge, and made his horse swim over Thames unto Lambeth. Then within a while he came to a wood, where was a narrow way; and there the archers were laid in ambush. And they shot at him, and smote his horse, so that he fell. Then Sir Launcelot left his horse and went on foot, but there lay so many ditches and hedges betwixt the archers and him that he might not meddle with them. "Alas! for shame," said Sir Launcelot, "that ever one knight should betray another! but it is an old saw, a good man is never in danger but when he is in danger of a coward." Then Sir Launcelot went awhile, and he was exceedingly cumbered by his armor, his shield, and his spear, and all that belonged to him. Then by chance there came by him a cart that came thither to fetch wood.

Now at this time carts were little used except for carrying offal and for conveying criminals to execution. But Sir Launcelot took no thought of anything but the necessity of haste for the purpose of rescuing the queen; so he demanded of the carter that he should take him in, and convey him as speedily as possible for a liberal reward. The carter consented, and Sir Launcelot placed himself in the cart, and only lamented that with much jolting he made but little progress. Then it happened Sir Gawain passed by, and seeing an armed knight travelling in that unusual way, he drew near to see who it might be. Then Sir Launcelot told him how the queen had been carried off, and how, in hastening to her rescue, his horse had been disabled, and he had been compelled to avail himself of the cart rather than give up his enterprise. Then Sir Gawain said, "Surely it is unworthy of a knight to travel in such sort;" but Sir Launcelot heeded him not.

At nightfall they arrived at a castle, and the lady thereof came out at the head of her damsels to welcome Sir Gawain,

But to admit his companion, whom she supposed to be a criminal, or at least a prisoner, it pleased her not; however, to oblige Sir Gawain, she consented. At supper Sir Launcelot came near being consigned to the kitchen, and was only admitted to the lady's table at the earnest solicitation of Sir Gawain. Neither would the damsels prepare a bed for him. He seized the first he found unoccupied, and was left undisturbed.

Next morning he saw from the turrets of the castle a train accompanying a lady, whom he imagined to be the queen. Sir Gawain thought it might be so, and became equally eager to depart. The lady of the castle supplied Sir Launcelot with a horse, and they traversed the plain at full speed. They learned from some travellers whom they met that there were two roads which led to the castle of Sir Maleagans. Here therefore the friends separated. Sir Launcelot found his way beset with obstacles, which he encountered successfully, but not without much loss of time. As evening approached, he was met by a young and sportive damsel, who gayly proposed to him a supper at her castle. The knight, who was hungry and weary, accepted the offer, though with no very good grace. He followed the lady to her castle, and eat voraciously of her supper, but was quite impenetrable to all her amorous advances. Suddenly the scene changed, and he was assailed by six furious ruffians, whom he dealt with so vigorously that most of them were speedily disabled, when again there was a change, and he found himself alone with his fair hostess, who informed him that she was none other than his guardian fairy, who had but subjected him to tests of his courage and fidelity. The next day the fairy brought him on his road, and before parting gave him a ring, which she told him would by its changes of color disclose to him all enchantments, and enable him to subdue them.

Sir Launcelot pursued his journey, without being much incommoded except by the taunts of travellers, who all seemed to have learned, by some means, his disgraceful drive in the cart. One, more insolent than the rest, had the audacity to interrupt him during dinner, and even to risk a battle in support of his pleasantry. Launcelot, after an easy victory, only doomed him to be carted in his turn.

At night he was received at another castle with great ap-

Flight of Sir Launcelot.

parent cordiality, but found himself in the morning in a dungeon, and loaded with chains. Consulting his ring, and finding that this was an enchantment, he burst his chains, seized his armor in spite of the visionary monsters who attempted to defend it, broke open the gates of the tower, and continued his journey. At length his progress was checked by a wide and rapid torrent, which could only be passed on a narrow bridge, on which a false step would prove his destruction. Launcelot, leading his horse by the bridle, and making him swim by his side, passed over the bridge, and was attacked as soon as he reached the bank by a lion and a leopard, both of which he slew, and then, exhausted and bleeding, seated himself on the grass and endeavored to bind up his wounds, when he was accosted by Brademagus, the father of Maleagans, whose castle was then in sight, and at no great distance. This king, no less courteous than his son was haughty and insolent, after complimenting Sir Launcelot on the valor and skill he had displayed in the perils of the bridge and the wild beasts, offered him his assistance, and informed him that the queen was safe in his castle, but could only be rescued by encountering Maleagans. Launcelot demanded the battle for the next day, and accordingly it took place, at the foot of the tower, and under the eyes of the fair captive. Launcelot was enfeebled by his wounds, and fought not with his usual spirit, and the contest for a time was doubtful; till Guinevere exclaimed, "Ah, Launcelot! my knight, truly have I been told that thou art no longer worthy of me!" These words instantly revived the drooping knight; he resumed at once his usual superiority, and soon laid at his feet his haughty adversary.

He was on the point of sacrificing him to his resentment, when Guinevere, moved by the entreaties of Brademagus, ordered him to withhold the blow, and he obeyed. The castle and its prisoners were now at his disposal. Launcelot hastened to the apartment of the queen, threw himself at her feet, and was about to kiss her hand, when she exclaimed, "Ah, Launcelot! why do I see thee again, yet feel thee to be no longer worthy of me, after having been disgracefully drawn about the country in a——" She had not time to finish the phrase, for her lover suddenly started from her, and, bitterly lamenting that he had incurred the displeasure of his sovereign lady, rushed out of the

castle, threw his sword and his shield to the right and left, ran furiously into the woods, and disappeared.

It seems that the story of the abominable cart, which haunted Launcelot at every step, had reached the ears of Sir Kay, who had told it to the queen, as a proof that her knight must have been dishonored. But Guinevere had full leisure to repent the haste with which she had given credit to the tale. Three days elapsed, during which Launcelot wandered without knowing where he went, till at last he began to reflect that his mistress had doubtless been deceived by misrepresentation, and that it was his duty to set her right. He therefore returned, compelled Maleagans to release his prisoners, and, taking the road by which they expected the arrival of Sir Gawain, had the satisfaction of meeting him the next day; after which the whole company proceeded gayly towards Camelot.

CHAPTER X.

The Lady of Sha-lott'-E-laine'.

The Lady of Sha-lott'.

KING ARTHUR proclaimed a solemn tournament to be held at Winchester. The king, not less impatient than his knights for this festival, set off some days before to superintend the preparations, leaving the queen with her court at Camelot. Sir Launcelot, under pretence of indisposition, remained behind also. His intention was to attend the tournament in disguise; and having communicated his project to Guinevere, he mounted his horse, set off without any attendant, and, counterfeiting the feebleness of age, took the most unfrequented road to Winchester, and passed unnoticed as an old knight who was going to be a spectator of the sports. Even Arthur and Gawain, who happened to behold him from the windows of a castle under which he passed, were the dupes of his disguise. But an accident betrayed him. His horse happened to stumble, and the hero, forgetting for a moment his assumed character, recovered the animal with a strength and agility so peculiar to himself that they instantly recognized the inimitable Launcelot. They suffered him, however, to proceed on his journey without interruption, convinced that his extraordinary feats of arms must discover him at the approaching festival.

In the evening Launcelot was magnificently entertained as a stranger knight at the neighboring castle of Shalott.

"On either side the river lie
Long fields of barley and of rye,
That clothe the wold and meet the sky;
And thro' the field the road runs by
To many-tower'd Camelot;
And up and down the people go,
Gazing where the lilies blow
Round an island there below,
The island of Shalott.

Willows whiten, aspens quiver,
Little breezes dusk and shiver
Thro' the wave that runs forever
By the island in the river
Flowing down to Camelot.
Four gray walls, and four gray towers,
Overlook a space of flowers,
And the silent isle imbowers
The Lady of Shalott."
—THE LADY OF SHALOTT.

The lord of this castle had a daughter of exquisite beauty, and two sons lately received into the order of knighthood, one of whom was at that time ill in bed, and thereby prevented from attending the tournament, for which both brothers had long made preparations. Launcelot offered to attend the other, if he were permitted to borrow the armor of the invalid, and the lord of Shalott, without knowing the name of his guest, being satisfied from his appearance that his son could not have a better assistant in arms, most thankfully accepted the offer. In the meantime the young lady, who had been much struck by the first appearance of the stranger knight, continued to survey him with increased attention, and, before the conclusion of supper, became so deeply enamored of him that, after frequent changes of color, and other symptoms which Sir Launcelot could not possibly mistake, she was obliged to retire to her chamber and seek relief in tears.

"He spoke and ceased.
The lily maid, Elaine, won by the mellow voice,
Lifted her eyes and read his lineaments."—ELAINE.

Sir Launcelot hastened to convey to her, by means of her brother, the information that his heart was already disposed of,

but that it would be his pride and pleasure to act as her knight at the approaching tournament. The lady, obliged to be satisfied with that courtesy, presented him her scarf to be worn at the tournament.

Launcelot set off in the morning with the young knight, who, on approaching Winchester, carried him to the castle of a lady, sister to the lord of Shalott, by whom they were hospitably entertained. The next day they put on their armor, which was perfectly plain, and without any device, as was usual to youths during the first year of knighthood, their shields being only painted red, as some color was necessary to enable them to be recognized by their attendants.

"A bow-shot from her bower-eaves,
He rode between the barley-sheaves.
The sun came dazzling thro' the leaves,
And flamed upon the brazen greaves
Of bold Sir Launcelot.
A red-cross knight forever kneel'd
To a lady in his shield,
That sparkled on the yellow field,
Beside remote Shalott."

—THE LADY OF SHALOTT.

Launcelot wore on his crest the scarf of the maid of Shalott, and, thus equipped, proceeded to the tournament, where the knights were divided into two companies, the one commanded by Sir Galehaut, the other by King Arthur. Having surveyed the combat for a short time from without the lists, and observed that Sir Galehaut's party began to give way, they joined the press and attacked the royal knights, the young man choosing such adversaries as were suited to his strength, while his companion selected the principal champions of the Round Table, and successively overthrew Gawain, Bohort, and Lionel. The astonishment of the spectators was extreme, for it was thought that no one but Launcelot could possess such invincible force; yet the favor on his crest seemed to preclude the possibility of his being thus disguised, for Launcelot had never been known to wear the badge of any but his sovereign lady. At length Sir Hector, Launcelot's brother, engaged him, and after a dreadful combat wounded him dangerously in the head, but was himself

completely stunned by a blow on the helmet, and felled to the ground; after which the conqueror rode off at full speed, attended by his companion.

They returned to the castle of Shalott, where Launcelot was attended with the greatest care by the good earl, by his two sons, and, above all, by his fair daughter, whose medical skill probably much hastened the period of his recovery. His health was almost completely restored, when Sir Hector, Sir Robert, and Sir Lionel, who, after the return of the court to Camelot, had undertaken the quest of their relation, discovered him walking on the walls of the castle. Their meeting was very joyful; they passed three days in the castle amidst constant festivities, and bantered each other on the events of the tournament. Launcelot, though he began by vowing vengeance against the author of his wound, yet ended by declaring that he felt rewarded for the pain by the pride he took in witnessing his brother's extraordinary prowess. He then dismissed them with a message to the queen, promising to follow immediately, it being necessary that he should first take a formal leave of his kind hosts, as well as of the fair maid of Shalott.

The young lady, after vainly attempting to detain him by her tears and solicitations, saw him depart without leaving her any ground for hope.

It was early summer when the tournament took place; but some months had passed since Launcelot's departure, and winter was now near at hand. The health and strength of the Lady of Shalott had gradually sunk, and she felt that she could not live apart from the object of her affections. She left the castle, and, descending to the river's brink, placed herself in a boat, which she loosed from its moorings, and suffered to bear her down the current toward Camelot.

One morning, as Sir Arthur and Sir Lionel looked from the window of the tower, the walls of which were washed by a river, they descried a boat richly ornamented, and covered with an awning of cloth of gold, which appeared to be floating down the stream without any human guidance. It struck the shore while they watched it, and they hastened down to examine it. Beneath the awning they discovered the dead body of a beautiful woman, in whose features Sir Lionel easily recognized the lovely maid of Shalott.

Elaine in the Tower.

"Who is this? and what is here?
And in the lighted palace near
Died the sound of royal cheer;
And they crossed themselves for fear,
All the knights at Camelot.
But Launcelot mused a little space;
He said, 'She has a lovely face;
God in his mercy lend her grace,
The Lady of Shalott.'"

—THE LADY OF SHALOTT.

Pursuing their search, they discovered a purse richly embroidered with gold and jewels, and within the purse a letter, which Arthur opened and found addressed to himself and all the knights of the Round Table, stating that Launcelot of the Lake, the most accomplished of knights and most beautiful of men, but at the same time the most cruel and inflexible, had by his rigor produced the death of the wretched maiden, whose love was no less invincible than his cruelty. The king immediately gave orders for the interment of the lady, with all the honors suited to her rank, at the same time explaining to the knights the history of her affection for Launcelot, which moved the compassion and regret of all.

The Lady of Shalott has been retold so admirably by Tennyson, under the title of "Elaine," in "The Idylls of the King," we have thought well to extend this chapter, although it involves in part a repetition of the above.

E-laine'.

The name of Elaine is most closely associated with that of Launcelot's. She was a sister to Sir Tor, and the daughter of Pellenore, the king. Her love for Launcelot developed into an undying passion. This awoke the jealousy of Guinevere, who ordered her as a rival to retire from the court. Elaine returned to her father's palace, and spent her time in burnishing Launcelot's shield.

"Elaine the fair, Elaine the lovable,
Elaine, the lily maid of Astolat,
High in her chamber up a tower to the east,
Guarded the sacred shield of Launcelot;

Which first she placed where morning's earliest ray
Might strike it, and awake her with the gleam."—ELAINE.

Sir Launcelot in the meantime had abandoned Camelot, and for two years lived alone in the forest. While there he was attacked by a wild boar and barely escaped with his life. Here he was found by a poor hermit, who took him to his hermitage and healed him of his wounds. Sir Launcelot, with his returning strength, wandered into the city and sought refuge in the king's palace. One day he fell asleep by the well, and was discovered by Elaine. He was at once carried into the tower and healed by the sight of the Holy Grail. When his reason returned he asked how he came to be at King Pellenore's court. He was told by Elaine that he had come as a mad man, and but for her his identity had not been discovered. Launcelot determined from then on to remain at Astolat and never return to Camelot again. King Pellenore built him a palace, and for a time he appeared to be content. But the knightly passion was strong upon him. A tournament was to be held at Camelot, and Launcelot determined to be present.

"Then answer'd Launcelot, the chief of knights,
'But since I go to joust as one unknown,
Hereafter you shall know me—and the shield—
I pray you lend me one, if such you have,
Blank, or at least with some device not mine.'"—ELAINE.

The Lord of Astolat gave him the shield of his son Tor. Launcelot wore the colors of Elaine, and entered the lists unknown. It was a battle of the giants.

"They couch'd their spears and prick'd their steeds and thus,
Their plumes driv'n backward by the wind they made
In moving, all together down upon him
Bare, as a wild wave in the wide North Sea."—ELAINE.

The spectators were wild with excitement, and all wondered who the unknown knight might be. Presently it was whispered

"Is it Launcelot who has come
Despite the wound he spake of, all for gain
Of glory, and has added wound to wound?"—ELAINE.

Launcelot having been severely wounded, he was carried from the field and taken to a hermit's cave. Elaine sought him out.

Sir Launcelot Wounded.

"And when they gain'd the cell in which he slept,
His battle-writhen arms and mighty hands
Lay naked on a wolfskin, and a dream
Of dragging down his enemy made them move.
Then she that saw him lying unsleek, unshorn,
Gaunt as it were the skeleton of himself,
Uttered a little tender dolorous cry."—ELAINE.

After he had sufficiently recovered he was removed to Astolat, where Elaine continued to be his nurse. But the knight's thoughts were elsewhere.

"And Launcelot
Would, tho' he call'd his wound a little hurt
Whereof he should be quickly whole, at times
Brain-feverous in his heat and agony, seem
Uncourteous, even he."—ELAINE.

Upon his recovery Launcelot resolved to return to Camelot. Elaine sat at the window when the knight rode by. He knew that she was there.

"And yet he glanced not up nor waved his hand."—ELAINE.

Sir Launcelot tried to forget Elaine and the associations of Shalott. His manner indicated a most heartless spirit.

"His broad clear brow in sunlight glow'd;
On burnish'd hooves his war-horse trode,
From underneath his helmet flow'd
His coal-black curls as on he rode,
As he rode down to Camelot.
From the bank and from the river
He flash'd into the crystal mirror,
'Tirra lirra,' by the river,
Sang Sir Launcelot."
—THE LADY OF SHALOTT.

Elaine was thus left alone, while Guinevere was made happy by Launcelot's return.

"So in her tower alone the maiden sat:
His very shield was gone; only the case,
Her own poor work, her empty labor, left."—ELAINE.

She wandered aimlessly through the palace singing a strange monody which she called her song, "The Song of Love and Death."

"Sweet is true love tho' given in vain, in vain;
And sweet is death who puts an end to pain:
I know not which is sweeter, no, not I.

"Love, art thou sweet? then bitter death must be:
Love, thou art bitter; sweet is death to me.
O Love, if death be sweeter, let me die.

"Sweet love, that seems not made to fade away,
Sweet death, that seems to make us loveless clay,
I know not which is sweeter, no, not I.

"I fain would follow love, if that could be;
I needs must follow death, who calls for me;
Call and I follow, I follow! let me die."

One day she called her father, and asked that he write a letter in her name and address it to Launcelot and the Queen.

> "And lay the letter in my hand
> A little ere I die, and close the hand
> Upon it; I shall guard it even in death.
> And when the heat is gone from out my heart,
> Then take the little bed on which I died
> For Launcelot's love, and deck it like the Queen's
> For richness, and me also like the Queen
> In all I have of rich, and lay me on it.
> And let there be prepared a chariot-bier
> To take me to the river, and a barge
> Be ready on the river, clothed in black.
> I go in state to court, to meet the Queen.
> There surely I shall speak for mine own self,
> And none of you can speak for me so well.
> And therefore let our dumb old man alone
> Go with me, he can steer and row, and he
> Will guide me to that palace, to the doors."—ELAINE.

The father promised, thinking the request more fantasy than real.

> "But ten slow mornings past, and on the eleventh
> Her father laid the letter in her hand,
> And closed the hand upon it, and she died.
> So that day there was dole in Astolat."—ELAINE.

She was borne by her two brothers to the river, where the barge was in readiness. They laid her upon a couch, and placing a lily in her hands, turned away in sorrow:

> "Then rose the dumb old servitor, and the dead
> Steer'd by the dumb went upward with the flood."—ELAINE.

The barge floated on until it came near to the Castle of Camelot. Launcelot was the first to see it:

> "Then while Sir Launcelot leant, in half disgust
> At love, life, all things, on the window-ledge,
> Close underneath his eyes, and right across
> Where these had fallen, slowly past the barge
> Whereon the lily maid of Astolat
> Lay smiling, like a star in blackest night.
> Then turned the tongueless man
> From the half-face to the full-eye, and rose
> And pointed to the damsel."—ELAINE.

Sir Arthur ordered the dead to be brought within the palace. And as he stood gazing upon her face—

> "He spied the letter in her hand,
> Stoopt, took, brake seal, and read it; this was all.
> 'Most noble lord, Sir Launcelot of the Lake,
> I, sometime call'd the maid of Astolat,
> Come, for you left me taking no farewell,
> Hither, to take my last farewell of you.
> I loved you, and my love had no return,
> And therefore my true love has been my death.
> And therefore to our lady Guinevere,
> And to all other ladies, I make moan.
> Pray for my soul, and yield me burial.
> Pray for my soul thou too, Sir Launcelot,
> As thou art a knight peerless.'
> Thus he read,
> And ever in the reading, lords and dames
> Wept, looking often from his face who read
> To hers which lay so silent, and at times,
> So touched were they, half-thinking that her lips,
> Who had devised the letter, moved again."—ELAINE.

Sir Launcelot confessed that Elaine's love surpassed that of all women, but to be loved makes not to love again. The Queen reproached him, but—

> "Launcelot answer'd nothing; he only went,
> And at the inrunning of a little brook
> Sat by the river in a cove, and watch'd
> The high reed wave, and lifted up his eyes
> And saw the barge that brought her moving down,
> Far off, a blot upon the stream, and said
> Low in himself, 'Ah, simple heart and sweet,
> You loved me, damsel, surely with a love
> Far tenderer than my Queen's. Pray for thy soul?
> Ay, that will I. Farewell too—now at last—
> Farewell.'"—ELAINE.

Elaine's Last Voyage.

CHAPTER XI.

Queen Guin'e-vere's Peril.

It happened at this time that Queen Guinevere was thrown into great peril of her life. A certain squire who was in her immediate service, having some cause of animosity to Sir Gawain, determined to destroy him by poison at a public entertainment. For this purpose he concealed the poison in an apple of fine appearance, which he placed on the top of several others, and put the dish before the queen, hoping that, as Sir Gawain was the knight of greatest dignity, she would present the apple to him. But it happened that a Scottish knight of high distinction, who arrived on that day, was seated next to the queen, and to him as a stranger she presented the apple, which he had no sooner eaten than he was seized with dreadful pain, and fell senseless. The whole court was of course thrown into confusion; the knights rose from table, darting looks of indignation at the wretched queen, whose tears and protestations were unable to remove their suspicions. In spite of all that could be done the knight died, and nothing remained but to order a magnificent funeral and monument for him, which was done.

Some time after, Sir Mador, brother of the murdered knight, arrived at Arthur's court in quest of him. While hunting in the forest he by chance came to the spot where the monument was erected, read the inscription, and returned to court determined on immediate and signal vengeance. He rode into the hall, loudly accused the queen of treason, and insisted on her being given up to punishment unless she should find, by a certain day,

a knight hardy enough to risk his life in support of her innocence. Arthur, powerful as he was, did not dare to deny the appeal, but was compelled, with a heavy heart, to accept it, and Mador sternly took his departure, leaving the royal couple plunged in terror and anxiety.

During all this time Launcelot was absent, and no one knew where he was. He had fled in anger from his fair mistress upon being reproached by her with his passion for the Lady of Shalott, which she had hastily inferred from his wearing her scarf at the tournament. He took up his abode with a hermit in the forest, and resolved to think no more of the cruel beauty, whose conduct he thought must flow from a wish to get rid of him. Yet calm reflection had somewhat cooled his indignation, and he had begun to wish, though hardly able to hope, for a reconciliation, when the news of Sir Mador's challenge fortunately reached his ears. The intelligence revived his spirits, and he began to prepare with the utmost cheerfulness for a contest which, if successful, would insure him at once the affection of his mistress and the gratitude of his sovereign.

The sad fate of the Lady of Shalott had ere this completely acquitted Launcelot in the queen's mind of all suspicion of his fidelity, and she lamented most grievously her foolish quarrel with him, which now, at her time of need, deprived her of her most efficient champiom.

As the day appointed by Sir Mador was fast approaching, it became necessary that she should procure a champion for her defence; and she successively adjured Sir Hector, Sir Lionel, Sir Bohort, and Sir Gawain to undertake the battle. She fell on her knees before them, called Heaven to witness her innocence of the crime alleged against her, but was sternly answered by all that they could not fight to maintain the innocence of one whose act, and fatal consequences of it, they had seen with their own eyes. She retired, therefore, dejected and disconsolate; but the sight of the fatal pile on which, if guilty, she was doomed to be burned, excited her to fresh effort; she again repaired to Sir Bohort, threw herself at his feet, and, piteously calling on him for mercy, fell into a swoon. The brave knight was not proof against this. He raised her up, and hastily promised that he would undertake her cause, if no other or better champion should

present himself. He then summoned his friends, and told them his resolution; and as a mortal combat with Sir Mador was a most fearful enterprise, they agreed to accompany him in the morning to the hermitage in the forest, where he proposed to receive absolution from the hermit, and to make his peace with Heaven, before he entered the lists. As they approached the hermitage, they espied a knight riding in the forest, whom they at once recognized as Sir Launcelot. Overjoyed at the meeting, they quickly, in answer to his questions, confirmed the news of the queen's imminent danger, and received his instructions to return to court, to comfort her as well as they could, but to say nothing of his intention of undertaking her defence, which he meant to do in the character of an unknown adventurer.

On their return to the castle they found that mass was finished, and had scarcely time to speak to the queen before they were summoned into the hall to dinner. A general gloom was spread over the countenances of all the guests. Arthur himself was unable to conceal his dejection, and the wretched Guinevere, motionless and bathed in tears, sat in trembling expectation of Sir Mador's appearance. Nor was it long ere he stalked into the hall, and with a voice of thunder, rendered more impressive by the general silence, demanded instant judgment on the guilty party. Arthur replied, with dignity, that little of the day was spent, and that perhaps a champion might yet be found capable of satisfying his thirst for battle. Sir Bohort now rose from table, and, shortly returning in complete armor, resumed his place, after receiving the embraces and thanks of the king, who now began to resume some degree of confidence. Sir Mador, growing impatient, again repeated his denunciations of vengeance, and insisted that the combat should no longer be postponed.

In the height of the debate there came riding into the hall a knight mounted on a black steed, and clad in black armor, with his visor down, and lance in hand. "Sir," said the king, "is it your will to alight and partake of our cheer?" "Nay, sir," he replied; "I come to save a lady's life. The queen hath ill bestowed her favors, and honored many a knight, that in her hour of need she should have none to take her part. Thou that darest accuse her of treachery stand forth, for to-day shalt thou need all thy might."

Sir Mador, though surprised, was not appalled by the stern challenge and formidable appearance of his antagonist, but prepared for the encounter. At the first shock both were unhorsed. They then drew their swords, and commenced a combat which lasted from noon till evening, when Sir Mador, whose strength began to fail, was felled to the ground by Launcelot, and compelled to sue for mercy. The victor, whose arm was already raised to terminate the life of his opponent, instantly dropped his sword, courteously lifted up the fainting Sir Mador, frankly confessing that he had never before encountered so formidable an enemy. The other, with similar courtesy, solemnly renounced all further projects of vengeance for his brother's death ; and the two knights, now become fast friends, embraced each other with the greatest cordiality. In the meantime Arthur, having recognized Sir Launcelot, whose helmet was now unlaced, rushed down into the lists, followed by all his knights, to welcome and thank his deliverer. Guinevere swooned with joy, and the place of combat suddenly exhibited a scene of the most tumultuous delight.

The general satisfaction was still further increased by the discovery of the real culprit. Having accidentally incurred some suspicion, he confessed his crime, and was publicly punished in the presence of Sir Mador.

The court now returned to the castle, which, with the title of "La Joyeuse Garde" bestowed upon it in memory of the happy event, was conferred on Sir Launcelot by Arthur, as a memorial of his gratitude.

CHAPTER XII.

Tris'tram and I-soude'.

MELIADUS was king of Leonois, or Lionesse, a country famous in the annals of romance, which adjoined the kingdom of Cornwall, but has now disappeared from the map, having been, it is said, overwhelmed by the ocean. Meliadus was married to Isabella, sister of Mark, king of Cornwall. A fairy fell in love with him, and drew him away by enchantment while he was engaged in hunting. His queen set out in quest of him, but was taken ill on her journey, and died, leaving an infant son, whom, from the melancholy circumstances of his birth, she called Tristram.

> "'Son,' she said, 'thy name shall be of sorrow,
> Tristram art thou called, for my death's sake.'
> So she said and died in the drear forest."
>
> —MATTHEW ARNOLD.

Gouvernail, the queen's squire, who had accompanied her, took charge of the child, and restored him to his father, who had at length burst the enchantments of the fairy, and returned home.

Meliadus, after seven years, married again, and the new queen, being jealous of the influence of Tristram with his

father, laid plots for his life, which were discovered by Gouvernail, who in consequence fled with the boy to the court of the king of France, where Tristram was kindly received, and grew up improving in every gallant and knightly accomplishment, adding to his skill in arms the arts of music and chess. In particular, he devoted himself to the chase and to all woodland sports, so that he became distinguished above all other chevaliers of the court for his knowledge of all that relates to hunting. He was a young man of great beauty, and is thus described by Sir Calidore in the Faery Queen :

> " Him steadfastly he marked, and saw to be
> A goodly youth of amiable grace,
> Yet but a slender slip, that scarce did see
> Yet seventeen years ; but tall and faire of face,
> That sure he deemed him borne of noble race.
> All in a woodman's jacket was he clad
> Of Lincoln greene, belayed with silver lace ;
> And on his head an hood with aglets sprad,
> And by his side his hunter's horn he hanging had."

No wonder that Belinda, the king's daughter, fell in love with him ; but as he did not return her passion, she, in a sudden impulse of anger, excited her father against him, and he was banished the kingdom. The princess soon repented of her act, and in despair destroyed herself, having first written a most tender letter to Tristram, sending him at the same time a beautiful and sagacious dog, of which she was very fond, desiring him to keep it as a memorial of her. Meliadus was now dead, and as his queen, Tristram's stepmother, held the throne, Gouvernail was afraid to carry his pupil to his native country, and took him to Cornwall, to his uncle Mark, who gave him a kind reception.

King Mark resided at the castle of Tintadel, already mentioned in the history of Uther and Igerne. In this court Tristram became distinguished in all the exercises incumbent on a knight ; nor was it long before he had an opportunity of practically employing his valor and skill. Moraunt, a celebrated champion, brother to the queen of Ireland, arrived at the court, to demand tribute of King Mark. The knights of Cornwall were held in ill repute not only by Arthur, but also his entire court. At one time King Mark sent a piece of beautiful cloth to Camelot as a

The Rending of the Cloth.

present to the king. Arthur, to show his contempt, ordered that it be rent and cast upon the hearth.

> "Then Arthur cried to rend the cloth, to rend
> In pieces, and to cast it upon the hearth."
>
> —GARETH AND LYNETTE.

King Mark could find no champion who dared to encounter the Irish knight, till his nephew Tristram, who had not yet received the honors of knighthood, craved to be admitted to the order, offering at the same time to fight the battle of Cornwall against the Irish champion. King Mark assented with reluctance; Tristram received the accolade, which conferred knighthood upon him; and the place and time were assigned for the encounter.

Without attempting to give the details of this famous combat, the first and one of the most glorious of Tristram's exploits, we shall only say that the young knight, though severely wounded, cleft the head of Moraunt, leaving a portion of his sword in the wound. Moraunt, half dead with his wound and the disgrace of his defeat, hastened to hide himself in his ship, sailed away with all speed for Ireland, and died soon after arriving in his own country.

The kingdom of Cornwall was thus delivered from its tribute. Tristram, weakened by the loss of blood, fell senseless. His friends flew to his assistance. They dressed his wounds, which in general healed readily; but the lance of Moraunt was poisoned, and one wound which it made yielded to no remedies, but grew worse day by day. The surgeons could do no more. Tristram asked permission of his uncle to depart, and seek for aid in the kingdom of Loegria (England). With his consent he embarked, and, after tossing for many days on the sea, was driven by the winds to the coast of Ireland. He landed, full of joy and gratitude that he had escaped the peril of the sea; took his rote,[1] and began to play. It was a summer evening, and the king of Ireland and his daughter, the beautiful Isoude, were at a window which overlooked the sea. The strange harper was sent for, and conveyed to the palace, where, finding that he was in Ireland, whose champion he had lately

[1] A musical instrument.

slain, he concealed his name, and called himself Tramtris. The queen undertook his cure, and by a medicated bath gradually restored him to health.

"What knight is this so weak and pale,
Though the locks are yet brown on his noble head,
Dropt on pillows in his bed?
Tristram of Lyoness.
What lady is this whose silk attire
Gleams so rich in the light of the fire?
Isoude of Ireland.—MATTHEW ARNOLD.

His skill in music and in games occasioned his being frequently called to court, and he became the instructor of the Princess Isoude in minstrelsy and poetry, who profited so well under his care that she soon had no equal in the kingdom, except her instructor.

At this time a tournament was held, at which many knights of the Round Table, and others, were present. On the first day a Saracen prince, named Palamedes, obtained the advantage over all. They brought him to the court and gave him a feast, at which Tristram, just recovering from his wound, was present. The fair Isoude appeared on this occasion in all her charms. Palamedes could not behold them without emotion, and made no effort to conceal his love. Tristram perceived it, and the pain he felt from jealousy taught him how dear the fair Isoude had already become to him.

Next day the tournament was renewed. Tristram, still feeble from his wound, rose during the night, took his arms, and concealed them in a forest near the place of the contest, and, after it had begun, mingled with the combatants. He overthrew all that encountered him, in particular Palamedes, whom he brought to the ground with a stroke of his lance, and then fought him hand to hand, bearing off the prize of the tourney. But his exertions caused his wound to reopen; he bled fast, and in this sad state, yet in triumph, they bore him to the palace. The fair Isoude devoted herself to his relief with an interest which grew more vivid day by day; and her skilful care soon restored him to health.

It happened one day that a damsel of the court, entering the closet where Tristram's arms were deposited, perceived that a

part of the sword had been broken off. It occurred to her that the missing portion was like that which was left in the skull of Morauntt, the Irish champion. She imparted her thought to the queen, who compared the fragment taken from her brother's wound with the sword of Tristram, and was satisfied that it was part of the same, and that the weapon of Tristram was that which reft her brother's life. She laid her griefs and resentment before the king, who satisfied himself with his own eyes of the truth of her suspicions.

> "And finding by the wound shape in his side
> This was the knight by whom their strength had died."
>
> —SWINBURNE.

Tristram was cited before the whole court, and reproached with having dared to present himself before them after having slain their kinsman. He acknowledged that he had fought with Morauntt to settle the claim for tribute, and said that it was by force of winds and waves alone that he was thrown on their coast. The queen demanded vengeance for the death of her brother; the fair Isoude trembled and grew pale, but a murmur rose from all the assembly that the life of one so handsome and so brave should not be taken for such a cause, and generosity finally triumphed over resentment in the mind of the king. Tristram was dismissed in safety, but commanded to leave the kingdom without delay, and never to return thither under pain of death. Tristram went back, with restored health, to Cornwall.

King Mark made his nephew give him a minute recital of his adventures. Tristram told him all minutely; but when he came to speak of the fair Isoude, he described her charms with a warmth and energy such as none but a lover could display. King Mark was fascinated with the description, and, choosing a favorable time, demanded a boon of his nephew, who readily granted it. The king made him swear upon the holy reliques that he would fulfill his commands. Then Mark directed him to go to Ireland and obtain for him the fair Isoude to be Queen of Cornwall.

Tristram believed it was certain death for him to return to Ireland; and how could he act as ambassador for his uncle in such a cause? Yet, bound by his oath, he hesitated not for an in-

stant. He only took the precaution to change his armor. He embarked for Ireland; but a tempest drove him to the coast of England, near Camelot, where King Arthur was holding his court, attended by the knights of the Round Table and many others, the most illustrious in the world.

Tristram kept himself unknown. He took part in many justs; he fought many combats, in which he covered himself with glory. One day he saw among those recently arrived the King of Ireland, father of the fair Isoude. This prince, accused of treason against his liege sovereign, Arthur, came to Camelot to free himself from the charge. Blaanor, one of the most redoubtable warriors of the Round Table, was his accuser, and Argius, the king, had neither youthful vigor nor strength to encounter him. He must therefore seek a champion to sustain his innocence. But the knights of the Round Table were not at liberty to fight against one another unless in a quarrel of their own. Argius heard of the great renown of the unknown knight; he also was witness of his exploits. He sought him, and conjured him to adopt his defence, and on his oath declared that he was innocent of the crime of which he was accused. Tristram readily consented, and made himself known to the king, who on his part promised to reward his exertions, if successful, with whatever gift he might ask.

Tristram fought with Blaanor and overthrew him, and held his life in his power. The fallen warrior called on him to use his right of conquest and strike the fatal blow. "God forbid," said Tristram, "that I should take the life of so brave a knight!" He raised him up and restored him to his friends. The judges of the field decided that the King of Ireland was acquitted of the charge against him, and they led Tristram in triumph to his tent. King Argius, full of gratitude, conjured Tristram to accompany him to his kingdom.

How happy a moment for Isoude, who knew that her father had promised his deliverer whatever boon he might ask! But the unhappy Tristram gazed on her with despair at the thought of the cruel oath which bound him. His magnanimous soul subdued the force of his love. He revealed the oath which he had taken, and with trembling voice demanded the fair Isoude for his uncle.

Argius consented, and soon all was prepared for the departure of Isoude. Brengwain, her favorite maid of honor, was to accompany her. On the day of departure the queen took aside this devoted attendant, and told her that she had observed that her daughter and Tristram were attached to one another, and that, to avert the bad effects of this inclination, she had procured from a powerful fairy a potent philter (love-draught), which she directed Brengwain to administer to Isoude and to King Mark on the evening of their marriage.

"They sailed between the moonfall and the sun,
Under the spent stars eastward; but the queen
Out of wise heart and subtle love had seen
Such things as might be, dark as in a glass,
And lest some doom of these should come to pass
Bethought her with her secret soul alone
To work some charm for marriage unison
And strike the heart of Isoude to her lord
With a spell stronger than the stroke of sword.
Therefore, with marvellous herbs and spells she wrought
To win the very wonder of her thought,
And brewed it with her secret hands and blest
And drew and gave out of her secret breast
To one her chosen and Isoude's handmaiden,
Brengwain, and bade her hide from sight of men
This marvel covered in a golden cup."—SWINBURNE.

Isoude and Tristram embarked together. A favorable wind filled the sails, and promised them a fortunate voyage. The lovers gazed upon one another, and could not repress their sighs. Love seemed to light up all his fires on their lips, as in their hearts. The day was warm; they suffered from thirst. Isoude first complained. Tristram descried the bottle containing the love-draught, which Brengwain had been so imprudent as to leave in sight. He took it, gave some of it to the charming Isoude, and drank the remainder himself.

"Ah, would I were in those green fields at play,
Not pent on shipboard this delicious day.
Tristram, I pray thee, of thy courtesy,
Reach me my golden phial."—MATTHEW ARNOLD.

The dog Houdain licked the cup. The ship arrived in Cornwall, and Isoude was married to King Mark. The old monarch

was delighted with his bride, and his gratitude to Tristram was unbounded. He loaded him with honors, and made him chamberlain of his palace, thus giving him access to the queen at all times.

In the midst of the festivities of the court which followed the royal marriage, an unknown minstrel one day presented himself bearing a harp of peculiar construction. He excited the curiosity of King Mark by refusing to play upon it till he should grant him a boon. The king having promised to grant his request, the minstrel, who was none other than the Saracen knight, Sir Palamedes, the lover of the fair Isoude, sung to the harp a lay, in which he demanded Isoude as the promised gift.

> "Ah, then, false hunter and false harper, thou
> Who brakest thro' the scruple of my bond."
> —THE LAST TOURNAMENT.

King Mark could not by the laws of knighthood withhold the boon. The lady was mounted on her horse, and led away by her triumphant lover. Tristram, it is needless to say, was absent at the time, and did not return until their departure. When he heard what had taken place, he seized his rote, and hastened to the shore, where Isoude and her new master had already embarked. Tristram played upon his rote, and the sound reached the ears of Isoude, who became so deeply affected that Sir Palamedes was induced to return with her to land, that they might see the unknown musician. Tristram watched his opportunity, seized the lady's horse by the bridle, and plunged with her into the forest, tauntingly informing his rival that "what he had got by the harp he had lost by the rote." Palamedes pursued, and a combat was about to commence, the result of which must have been fatal to one or other of these gallant knights; but Isoude stepped between them, and, addressing Palamedes, said, "You tell me that you love me; you will not, then, deny me the request I am about to make?" "Lady," he replied, "I will perform your bidding." "Leave, then," said she, "this contest, and repair to King Arthur's court, and salute Queen Guinevere from me; tell her that there are in the world but two ladies, herself and I, and two lovers, hers and mine; and come thou not in future in any place where I am." Pala-

medes burst into tears. "Ah, lady," said he, "I will obey you; but I beseech you that you will not for ever steel your heart against me." "Palamedes," she replied, "may I never taste of joy again if I ever quit my first love." Palamedes then went his way. The lovers remained a week in concealment, after which Tristram restored Isoude to her husband, advising him in future to reward minstrels in some other way.

The king showed much gratitude to Tristram, but in the bottom of his heart he cherished bitter jealousy of him. One day Tristram and Isoude were alone together in her private chamber. A base and cowardly knight of the court, named Andret, spied them through a keyhole. They set at a table of chess, but were not attending to the game. Andret brought the king, having first raised his suspicions, and placed him so as to watch their motions. The king saw enough to confirm his suspicions, and he burst into the apartment with his sword drawn, and had nearly slain Tristram before he was put on his guard. But Tristram avoided the blow, drew his sword, and drove before him the cowardly monarch, chasing him through all the apartments of the palace, giving him frequent blows with the flat of his sword, while he cried in vain to his knights to save him. But they did not dare to interpose.

The legend of Tristram was a favorite one among the more ancient writers. The Italian poets, Boiardo and Ariosto, have founded upon it the idea of the two enchanted fountains, which produced the opposite effects of love and hatred.

"Fair was that fountain, sculptured all of gold,
With alabaster sculptured, rich and rare,
And in its basin clear thou might'st behold
The flowery marge reflected fresh and fair.
Sage Merlin framed the font,—so legends bear,—
When on fair Isoude doated Tristram brave,
That the good errant knight, arriving there,
Might quaff oblivion in the enchanted wave,
And leave his luckless love, and 'scape his timeless grave.
But ne'er the warrior's evil fate allowed
His steps that fountain's charmed verge to gain,
Though restless roving on adventure proud,
He traversed oft the land and oft the main."—BOIARDO.

CHAPTER XIII.

Tris'tram and I-soude' (Continued).

After this affair Tristram was banished from the kingdom, and Isoude shut up in a tower, which stood on the bank of a river. Tristram could not resolve to depart without some further communication with his beloved; so he concealed himself in the forest, till at last he contrived to attract her attention, by means of twigs which he curiously peeled, and sent down the stream under her window. By this means many secret interviews were obtained. Tristram dwelt in the forest, sustaining himself by game, which the dog Houdain ran down for him; for this faithful animal was unequalled in the chase, and knew so well his master's wish for concealment, that, in the pursuit of his game, he never barked. At length Tristram departed, but left Houdain with Isoude, as a remembrancer of him.

Sir Tristram wandered through various countries, achieving the most perilous enterprises, and covering himself with glory, yet unhappy at the separation from his beloved Isoude. At length King Mark's territory was invaded by a neighboring chieftain, and he was forced to summon his nephew to his aid. Tristram obeyed the call, put himself at the head of his uncle's vassals, and drove the enemy out of the country. Mark was full of gratitude, and Tristram, restored to favor and to the

society of his beloved Isoude, seemed at the summit of happiness. But a sad reverse was at hand.

Tristram had brought with him a friend named Pheredin, son of the king of Brittany. This young knight saw Queen Isoude, and could not resist her charms. Knowing the love of his friend for the queen, and that that love was returned, Pheredin concealed his own, until his health failed, and he feared he was drawing near his end. He then wrote to the beautiful queen that he was dying for love of her.

The gentle Isoude, in a moment of pity for the friend of Tristram, returned him an answer so kind and compassionate that it restored him to life. A few days afterwards Tristram found this letter. The most terrible jealousy took possession of his soul; he would have slain Pheredin, who with difficulty made his escape. Then Tristram mounted his horse, and rode to the forest, where for ten days he took no rest nor food. At length he was found by a damsel lying almost dead by the brink of a fountain. She recognized him, and tried in vain to rouse his attention. At last, recollecting his love for music, she went and got her harp, and played thereon. Tristram was roused from his reverie; tears flowed; he breathed more freely; he took the harp from the maiden, and sung this lay, with a voice broken with sobs:

"Sweet I sang in former days,
Kind love perfected my lays:
Now my art alone displays
The woe that on my being preys.

"Charming love, delicious power,
Worshipped from my earliest hour,
Thou who life on all dost shower,
Love! my life thou dost devour.

"In death's hour I beg of thee,
Isoude, dearest enemy,
Thou who erst couldst kinder be,
When I'm gone, forget not me.

"On my gravestone passers-by
Oft will read, as low I lie,
'Never wight in love could vie
With Tristram, yet she let him die.'"

Tristram, having finished his lay, wrote it off and gave it to the damsel, conjuring her to present it to the queen.

Meanwhile Queen Isoude was inconsolable at the absence of Tristram. She discovered that it was caused by the fatal letter which she had written to Pheredin. Innocent, but in despair at the sad effects of her letter, she wrote another to Pheredin, charging him never to see her again. The unhappy lover obeyed this cruel decree. He plunged into the forest, and died of grief in a hermit's cell.

Isoude passed her days in lamenting the absence and unknown fate of Tristram. One day her jealous husband, having entered her chamber unperceived, overheard her singing the following lay:

"My voice to piteous wail is bent,
My harp to notes of languishment;
Ah, love! delightsome days be meant
For happier wights, with hearts content.

"Ah, Tristram! far away from me,
Art thou from restless anguish free?
Ah! couldst thou so one moment be,
From her who so much loveth thee?"

The king, hearing these words, burst forth in a rage; but Isoude was too wretched to fear his violence. "You have heard me," she said; "I confess it all. I love Tristram, and always shall love him. Without doubt he is dead, and died for me. I no longer wish to live. The blow that shall finish my misery will be most welcome."

The king was moved at the distress of the fair Isoude, and perhaps the idea of Tristram's death tended to allay his wrath. He left the queen in charge of her women, commanding them to take especial care lest her despair should lead her to do harm to herself.

Tristram meanwhile, distracted as he was, rendered a most important service to the shepherds by slaying a gigantic robber named Taullas, who was in the habit of plundering their flocks and rifling their cottages. The shepherds, in their gratitude to Tristram, bore him in triumph to King Mark to have him bestow on him a suitable reward. No wonder Mark failed to recognize in the half-clad wild man before him his nephew Tristram; but

grateful for the service the unknown had rendered, he ordered him to be well taken care of, and gave him in charge to the queen and her women.

> "For through the haggard air,
> The stained arms, the matted hair
> Of that stranger knight ill-starred
> There gleamed something which recalled
> The Tristram who in better days
> Was Launcelot's guest at Joyous Gard."
>
> —MATTHEW ARNOLD.

Under such care Tristram rapidly recovered his serenity and his health, so that the romancer tells us he became handsomer than ever. King Mark's jealousy revived with Tristram's health and good looks, and, in spite of his debt of gratitude so lately increased, he again banished him from the court.

Sir Tristram left Cornwall, and proceeded into the land of Loegria (England) in quest of adventures. One day he entered a wide forest. The sound of a little bell showed him that some inhabitant was near. He followed the sound, and found a hermit, who informed him that he was in the forest of Arnantes, belonging to the fairy Vivian, the Lady of the Lake, who, smitten with love for King Arthur, had found means to entice him to this forest, where by enchantments she held him a prisoner, having deprived him of all memory of who and what he was. The hermit informed him that all the knights of the Round Table were out in search of the king, and that he (Tristram) was now in the scene of the most grand and important adventures.

This was enough to animate Tristram in the search. He had not wandered far before he encountered a knight of Arthur's court, who proved to be Sir Kay the Seneschal, who demanded of him whence he came. Tristram answering, "From Cornwall," Sir Kay could not let slip the opportunity for a joke at the expense of the Cornish knight. Tristram chose to leave him in his error, and even confirmed him in it; for, meeting some other knights, Tristram declined to just with them. They spent the night together at an abbey, where Tristram submitted patiently to all their jokes. The Seneschal gave the word to his companions, that they should set out early next day, and

intercept the Cornish knight on his way, and enjoy the amusement of seeing his fright when they should insist on running a tilt with him. Tristram next morning found himself alone; he put on his armor, and set out to continue his quest. He soon saw before him the Seneschal and the three knights, who barred the way, and insisted on a just. Tristram excused himself a long time; at last he reluctantly took his stand. He encountered them, one after the other, and overthrew them all four, man and horse, and then rode off, bidding them not to forget their friend, the knight of Cornwall.

Tristram had not ridden far when he met a damsel, who cried out, "Ah, my lord! hasten forward, and prevent a horrid treason!" Tristram flew to her assistance, and soon reached a spot where he beheld a knight, whom three others had borne to the ground, and were unlacing his helmet in order to cut off his head.

Tristram flew to the rescue, and slew with one stroke of his lance one of the assailants. The knight, recovering his feet, sacrificed another to his vengeance, and the third made his escape. The rescued knight then raised the visor of his helmet, and a long white beard fell down upon his breast. The majesty and venerable air of this knight made Tristram suspect that it was none other than Arthur himself, and the prince confirmed his conjecture. Tristram would have knelt before him, but Arthur received him in his arms, and inquired his name and country; but Tristram declined to disclose them, on the plea that he was now on a quest requiring secrecy. At this moment the damsel who had brought Tristram to the rescue darted forward, and, seizing the king's hand, drew from his finger a ring, the gift of the fairy, and by that act dissolved the enchantment. Arthur, having recovered his reason and his memory, offered to Tristram to attach him to his court, and to confer honors and dignities upon him; but Tristram declined all, and only consented to accompany him till he should see him safe in the hands of his knights. Soon after, Hector de Marys rode up, and saluted the king, who on his part introduced him to Tristram as one of the bravest of his knights. Tristram took leave of the king and his faithful follower, and continued his quest.

We cannot follow Tristram through all the adventures which

filled this epoch of his history. Suffice it to say, he fulfilled on all occasions the duty of a true knight, rescuing the oppressed, redressing wrongs, abolishing evil customs, and suppressing injustice, thus by constant action endeavoring to lighten the pains of absence from her he loved. In the meantime Isoude, separated from her dear Tristram, passed her days in languor and regret. At length she could no longer resist the desire to hear some news of her lover. She wrote a letter, and sent it by one of her damsels, niece of her faithful Brengwain. One day Tristram, weary with his exertions, had dismounted and laid himself down by the side of a fountain and fallen asleep. The damsel of Queen Isoude arrived at the same fountain, and recognized Passebreul, the horse of Tristram, and presently perceived his master, asleep. He was thin and pale, showing evident marks of the pain he suffered in separation from his beloved. She awaked him, and gave him the letter which she bore, and Tristram enjoyed the pleasure, so sweet to a lover, of hearing from and talking about the object of his affections. He prayed the damsel to postpone her return until after the magnificent tournament which Arthur had proclaimed should have taken place, and conducted her to the castle of Persides, a brave and loyal knight, who received her with great consideration.

Tristram conducted the damsel of Queen Isoude to the tournament, and had her placed in the balcony among the ladies of the queen.

> "He glanced and saw the stately galleries,
> Dame, damsel, each through worship of their Queen
> White-robed in honor of the stainless child,
> And some with scatter'd jewels, like a bank
> Of maiden snow mingled with sparks of fire.
> He looked but once, and veiled his eyes again."
>
> —THE LAST TOURNAMENT.

He then joined the tourney. Nothing could exceed his strength and valor. Launcelot admired him, and by a secret presentiment declined to dispute the honor of the day with a knight so gallant and so skilful. Arthur descended from the balcony to greet the conqueror; but the modest and devoted Tristram, content with having borne off the prize in the sight of the messenger of Isoude, made his escape with her, and disappeared.

The next day the tourney recommenced. Tristram assumed different armor, that he might not be known; but he was soon detected by the terrible blows that he gave. Arthur and Guinevere had no doubt that it was the same knight who had borne off the prize of the day before. Arthur's gallant spirit was roused. After Launcelot of the Lake and Sir Gawain, he was accounted the best knight of the Round Table. He went privately and armed himself, and came into the tourney in undistinguished armor. He ran a just with Tristram, whom he shook in his seat; but Tristram, who did not know him, threw him out of the saddle. Arthur recovered himself, and, content with having made proof of the stranger knight, bade Launcelot finish the adventure, and vindicate the honor of the Round Table. Sir Launcelot, at the bidding of the monarch, assailed Tristram, whose lance was already broken in former encounters.

> "Sir Tristram of the Woods—
> Whom Launcelot knew, had held sometime with pain
> His own against him, and now yearned to shake
> The burthen off his heart in one full shock
> With Tristram even to death: his strong hands gript
> And dinted the gilt dragons right and left.
> Until he groaned for wrath."—THE LAST TOURNAMENT.

But the law of this sort of combat was, that the knight, after having broken his lance, must fight with his sword, and must not refuse to meet with his shield the lance of his antagonist. Tristram met Launcelot's charge upon his shield, which that terrible lance could not fail to pierce. It inflicted a wound upon Tristram's side, and, breaking, left the iron in the wound. But Tristram also with his sword smote so vigorously on Launcelot's casque that he cleft it, and wounded his head. The wound was not deep, but the blood flowed into his eyes and blinded him for a moment, and Tristram, who thought himself mortally wounded, retired from the field. Launcelot declared to the king that he had never received such a blow in his life before.

Tristram hastened to Gouvernail, his squire, who drew forth the iron, bound up the wound, and gave him immediate ease. Tristram, after the tournament, kept retired in his tent, but Arthur, with the consent of all the knights of the Round Table, decreed him the honors of the second day. But it was no longer

a secret that the victor of the two days was the same individual, and Gouvernail, being questioned, confirmed the suspicions of Launcelot and Arthur, that it was no other than Sir Tristram of Leonais, the nephew of the king of Cornwall.

King Arthur, who desired to reward his distinguished valor, and knew that his uncle Mark had ungratefully banished him, would have eagerly availed himself of the opportunity to attach Tristram to his court—all the knights of the Round Table declaring with acclamation that it would be impossible to find a more worthy companion.

A minstrel was present and sang the glories of knighthood:

"Hushed were the throng, both limb and tongue,
And harpers for envy pale,
And armed lords leaned on their swords
And hearkened to the tale.

"He sang King Arthur's Table Round,
The Warrior of the Lake,
How courteous Gawain met the wound,
And bled for ladies' sake.

"But chief in gentle Tristram's praise
The notes melodious swell,
Was none excelled in Arthur's days,
The knight of Lionelle."—SCOTT.

But Tristram had already departed in search of adventures, and the damsel of Queen Isoude returned to her mistress.

CHAPTER XIV.

Sir Tris'tram and Sir Laun'ce-lot—Sir Tris'tram as a Sportsman.

Sir Tris'tram and Sir Laun'ce-lot.

Sir Tristram rode through a forest, and saw ten men fighting, and one man did battle against nine. So he rode to the knights and cried to them, bidding them cease their battle, for they did themselves great shame, so many knights to fight against one. Then answered the master of the knights (his name was Sir Breuse sans Pitie, who was at that time the most villanous knight living): "Sir knight, what have ye to do to meddle with us? If ye be wise, depart on your way as you came, for this knight shall not escape us." "That were pity," said Sir Tristram, "that so good a knight should be slain so cowardly; therefore I warn you I will succor him with all my puissance."

Then Sir Tristram alighted off his horse, because they were on foot, that they should not slay his horse. And he smote on the right hand and on the left so vigorously, that well-nigh at every stroke he struck down a knight.

> "Their spears are down, their steeds are bathed in foam,
> Up, Tristram up, on with the fight!"—Matthew Arnold.

At last they fled, with Breuse sans Pitie, into the tower, and shut Sir Tristram without the gate. Then Sir Tristram returned back to the rescued knight, and found him sitting under a tree, sore wounded. "Fair knight," said he, "how is it with you?" "Sir knight," said Palamedes, for he it was, "I thank you of your great goodness, for ye have rescued me from death." "What is your name?" said Sir Tristram. He said, "My name is Sir Palamedes." "Say ye so," said Sir Tristram;

"now know that thou art the man in the world that I most hate; therefore make thee ready, for I will do battle with thee." "What is your name?" said Sir Palamedes. "My name is Sir Tristram, your mortal enemy." "It may be so," said Sir Palamedes; "but you have done overmuch for me this day, that I should fight with you. Moreover, it will be no honor for you to have to do with me, for you are fresh and I am wounded. Therefore, if you will needs have to do with me, assign me a day, and I shall meet you without fail." "You say well," said Sir Tristram; "now I assign you to meet me in the meadow by the river of Camelot, where Merlin set the monument." So they were agreed. Then they departed, and took their ways diverse. Sir Tristram passed through a great forest into a plain, till he came to a priory, and there he reposed him with a good man six days.

Then departed Sir Tristram, and rode straight into Camelot to the monument of Merlin, and there he looked about him for Sir Palamedes. And he perceived a seemly knight, who came riding against him all in white, with a covered shield. When he came nigh, Sir Tristram said aloud, "Welcome, sir knight, and well and truly have you kept your promise." Then they made ready their shields and spears, and came together with all the might of their horses, so fiercely, that both the horses and the knights fell to the earth. And as soon as they might, they quitted their horses, and struck together with bright swords as men of might, and each wounded the other wonderfully sore, so that the blood ran out upon the grass. Thus they fought for the space of four hours, and never one would speak to the other one word. Then at last spake the white knight, and said, "Sir, thou fightest wonderful well, as ever I saw knight; therefore, if it please you, tell me your name." "Why dost thou ask my name?" said Sir Tristram; "art thou not Sir Palamedes?" "No, fair knight," said he, "I am Sir Launcelot of the Lake." "Alas!" said Sir Tristram, "what have I done? for you are the man of the world that I love best." "Fair knight," said Sir Launcelot, "tell me your name." "Truly," said he, "my name is Sir Tristram de Lionesse." "Alas! alas!" said Sir Launcelot, "what adventure has befallen me!" And therewith Sir Launcelot kneeled down, and yielded him up his sword;

and Sir Tristram kneeled down, and yielded him up his sword; and so either gave other the degree. And then they both went to the stone, and set them down upon it, and took off their helms, and each kissed the other a hundred times. And then anon they rode toward Camelot, and on the way they met with Sir Gawain and Sir Gaheris, that had made promise to Arthur never to come again to the court till they had brought Sir Tristram with them.

"Return again," said Sir Launcelot, "for your quest is done; for I have met with Sir Tristram. Lo, here he is in his own person." Then was Sir Gawain glad, and said to Sir Tristram, "Ye are welcome." With this came King Arthur, and when he wist there was Sir Tristram, he ran unto him, and shook him by the hand, and said, "Sir Tristram ye are as welcome as any knight that ever came to this court." Then Sir Tristram told the king how he came thither for to have had to do with Sir Palamedes, and how he had rescued him from Sir Breuse sans Pitie and the nine knights. Then King Arthur took Sir Tristram by the hand, and went to the Table Round, and Queen Guinevere came, and many ladies with her, and all the ladies said with one voice, "Welcome, Sir Tristram." "Welcome," said the knights. "Welcome," said Arthur, "for one of the best of knights, and the gentlest of the world, and the man of most worship; for of all manner of hunting thou bearest the prize, and of all measures of blowing thou art the beginning, and of all the terms of hunting and hawking ye are the inventor, and of all instruments of music ye are the best skilled; therefore, gentle knight," said Arthur, "ye are welcome to this court." And then King Arthur made Sir Tristram knight of the Table Round with great nobley and feasting as can be thought.

"Then Tristram, laughing, caught the harp and sang;
'Ay, ay, O ay—the winds that bend the brier!
A star in heaven, a star within the mere!
Ay, ay, O ay—a star was my desire;
And one was far apart, and one was near:
Ay, ay, O ay—the winds that bow the grass!
And one was water and one star was fire,
And one will ever shine and one will pass—
Ay, ay, O ay—the winds that move the mere.'"

—THE LAST TOURNAMENT.

Sir Tristram as a Sportsman.

Tristram is often alluded to by the romancers as authority on all matters that pertain to the chase. His life was calculated to develop this characteristic more than that of any other knight.

"All which my days I have not lewdly spent,
Nor spilt the blossom of my tender years
In idlesse; but, as was convenient,
Have trained been with many noble feres
In gentle thewes, and such like seemly leers;[1]
'Mongst which my most delight hath always been
To hunt the salvage chace, amongst my peers,
Of all that rangeth in the forest green,
Of which none is to me unknown that yet was seen.

"Ne is there hawk which mantleth on her perch,
Whether high towering or accosting low,
But I the measure of her flight do search,
And all her prey, and all her diet know.
Such be our joys, which in these forests grow."

—FAERY QUEENE.

[1] *Feres*, companions; *thewes*, labors; *leers*, learning.

CHAPTER XV.

Sir Tris'tram and the Round Table—Breuse the Pitiless.

Sir Tris'tram and the Round Table.

THE famous enchanter, Merlin, had exerted all his skill in fabricating the Round Table. Of the seats which surrounded it he had constructed thirteen, in memory of the thirteen Apostles. Twelve of these seats only could be occupied, and they only by knights of the highest fame; the thirteenth represented the seat of the traitor Judas. It remained always empty. It was called the perilous seat, ever since a rash and haughty Saracen knight had dared to place himself in it, when the earth opened and swallowed him up.

> "In our great hall there stood a vacant chair,
> Fashion'd by Merlin ere he past away,
> And carven with strange figures; and in and out
> The figures, like a serpent, ran a scroll
> Of letters in a tongue no man could read.
> And Merlin call'd it 'The Siege perilous,'
> Perilous for good and ill; 'for there,' he said,
> 'No man could sit but he should lose himself.'"
>
> —THE HOLY GRAIL.

A magic power wrote upon each seat the name of the knight who was entitled to sit in it. No one could succeed to a vacant seat unless he surpassed in valor and glorious deeds the knight

who had occupied it before him; without this qualification he would be violently repelled by a hidden force. Thus proof was made of all those who presented themselves to replace any companions of the order who had fallen.

One of the principal seats, that of Moraunt of Ireland, had been vacant ten years, and his name still remained over it ever since the time when that distinguished champion fell beneath the sword of Sir Tristram. Arthur now took Tristram by the hand and led him to that seat. Immediately the most melodious sounds were heard, and exquisite perfumes filled the place; the name of Moraunt disappeared, and that of Tristram blazed forth in light! The rare modesty of Tristram had now to be subjected to a severe task; for the clerks charged with the duty of preserving the annals of the Round Table attended, and he was required by the law of his order to declare what feats of arms he had accomplished to entitle him to take that seat. This ceremony being ended, Tristram received the congratulations of all his companions. Sir Launcelot and Guinevere took the occasion to speak to him of the fair Isoude, and to express their wish that some happy chance might bring her to the kingdom of Loegria.

While Tristram was thus honored and caressed at the court of King Arthur, the most gloomy and malignant jealously harassed the soul of Mark. He could not look upon Isoude without remembering that she loved Tristram, and the good fortune of his nephew goaded him to thoughts of vengeance. He at last resolved to go disguised into the kingdom of Loegria, attack Tristram by stealth, and put him to death. He took with him two knights, brought up in his court, who he thought were devoted to him; and, not willing to leave Isoude behind, named two of her maidens to attend her, together with her faithful Brengwain, and made them accompany him.

Having arrived in the neighborhood of Camelot, Mark imparted his plan to his two knights, but they rejected it with horror; nay, more, they declared that they would no longer remain in his service; and left him, giving him reason to suppose that they should repair to the court to accuse him before Arthur. It was necessary for Mark to meet and rebut their accusation; so, leaving Isoude in an abbey, he pursued his way alone to Camelot.

Mark had not ridden far when he encountered a party of knights of Arthur's court, and would have avoided them, for he knew their habit of challenging to a just every stranger knight whom they met. But it was too late. They had seen his armor, and recognized him as a Cornish knight, and at once resolved to have some sport with him. It happened they had with them Daguenet, King Arthur's fool, who, though deformed and weak of body, was not wanting in courage:

> "And little Dagonet on the morrow morn,
> High over all the yellowing Autumn-tide,
> Danced like a wither'd leaf before the Hall.
> Then Tristram, saying, 'Why skip ye so, Sir Fool?'
> Wheel'd round on either heel, Dagonet replied,
> 'Belike for lack of wiser company;
> Or being fool, and seeing too much wit
> Makes the world rotten, why, belike I skip
> To know myself the wisest knight of all.'"
>
> —THE LAST TOURNAMENT.

The knights, as Mark approached, laid their plan that Daguenet should personate Sir Launcelot of the Lake and challenge the Cornish knight. They equipped him in armor belonging to one of their number who was ill, and sent him forward to the cross-road to defy the strange knight. Mark, who saw that his antagonist was by no means formidable in appearance, was not disinclined to the combat; but when the dwarf rode towards him, calling out that he was Sir Launcelot of the Lake, his fears prevailed, he put spurs to his horse, and rode away at full speed, pursued by the shouts and laughter of the party.

Meanwhile Isoude, remaining at the abbey with her faithful Brengwain, found her only amusement in walking occasionally in a forest adjoining the abbey. There, on the brink of a fountain girdled with trees, she thought of her love, and sometimes joined her voice and her harp in lays reviving the memory of its pains or pleasures. One day the caitiff knight, Breuse the Pitiless, heard her voice, concealed himself, and drew near. She sang:

> "Sweet silence, shadowy bower, and verdant lair,
> Ye court my troubled spirit to repose,
> Whilst I, such dear remembrance rises there,
> Awaken every echo with my woes.

"Within these woods, by nature's hand arrayed,
A fountain springs, and feeds a thousand flowers;
Ah! how my groans do all its murmurs aid!
How my sad eyes do swell it with their showers!

"What doth my knight the while? to him is given
A double meed; in love and arms' emprise,
Him the Round Table elevates to heaven!
Tristram! ah me! he hears not Isoude's cries."

Breuse the Pitiless.

Breuse the Pitiless, who like most other caitiffs had felt the weight of Tristram's arm, and hated him accordingly, at hearing his name breathed forth by the beautiful songstress, impelled by a double impulse, rushed forth from his concealment and laid hands on his victim. Isoude fainted, and Brengwain filled the air with her shrieks. Breuse carried Isoude to the place where he had left his horse; but the animal had got away from his bridle, and was at some distance. He was obliged to lay down his fair burden and go in pursuit of his horse. Just then a knight came up, drawn by the cries of Brengwain, and demanded the cause of her distress. She could not speak, but pointed to her mistress lying insensible on the ground.

Breuse had by this time returned, and the cries of Brengwain, renewed at seeing him, sufficiently showed the stranger the cause of the distress. Tristram spurred his horse toward Breuse, who, not unprepared, ran to the encounter. Breuse was unhorsed, and lay motionless, pretending to be dead; but when the stranger knight left him to attend to the distressed damsels, he mounted his horse, and made his escape.

The knight now approached Isoude, gently raised her head, drew aside the golden hair which covered her countenance, gazed thereon for an instant, uttered a cry, and fell back insensible. Brengwain came; her cares soon restored her mistress to life, and then they turned their attention to the fallen warrior. They raised his visor, and discovered the countenance of Sir Tristram. Isoude threw herself on the body of her lover and bedewed his face with her tears. Their warmth revived the knight, and Tristram, on awaking, found himself in the arms of his dear Isoude.

"All round the forest sweeps off, black in shade,
But it is moonlight in the open glade;
And in the bottom of the glade shine clear
The forest-chapel and the fountain near.
—I think I have a fever in my blood;
Come, let me leave the shadow of this wood,
Ride down, and bathe my hot brow in the flood.
—Mild shines the cold spring in the moon's clear light;
God! 'tis her face plays in the waters bright.
'Fair love,' she says, 'canst thou forget so soon,
At this soft hour, under this sweet moon?—
Isoude!"—MATTHEW ARNOLD.

It was the law of the Round Table that each knight after his admission should pass the next ten days in quest of adventures, during which time his companions might meet him in disguised armor and try their strength with him. Tristram had now been out seven days, and in that time had encountered many of the best knights of the Round Table, and acquitted himself with honor. During the remaining three days Isoude remained at the abbey, under his protection, and then set out with her maidens, escorted by Sir Tristram, to rejoin King Mark at the court of Camelot.

This happy journey was one of the brightest epochs in the lives of Tristram and Isoude. He celebrated it by a lay upon the harp in a peculiar measure, to which the French give the name of Triolet.

"With fair Isoude and with love,
Ah! how sweet the life I lead!
How blest forever thus to rove,
With fair Isoude, and with love!
As she wills, I live and move,
And cloudless days to days succeed:
With fair Isoude and with love,
Ah! how sweet the life I lead!

"Journeying on from break of day,
Feel you not fatigued, my fair?
Yon green turf invites to play;
Journeying on from day to day,
Ah! let us to that shade away,
Were it but to slumber there!
Journeying on from break of day,
Feel you not fatigued, my fair?"

They arrived at Camelot, where Sir Launcelot received them most cordially. Isoude was introduced to King Arthur and Queen Guinevere, who welcomed her as a sister. As King Mark was held in arrest under the accusation of the two Cornish knights, Queen Isoude could not rejoin her husband, and Sir Launcelot placed his castle of La Joyeuse Garde at the disposal of his two friends, who there took up their abode.

King Mark, who found himself obliged to confess the truth of the charge against him, or to clear himself by combat with his accusers, preferred the former, and King Arthur, as his crime had not been perpetrated, remitted the penalty, only enjoining upon him, under pain of his signal displeasure, to lay aside all thoughts of vengeance against his nephew. In the presence of the king and his court, all parties were formally reconciled; Mark and his queen departed for their home, and Tristram remained at Arthur's court.

CHAPTER XVI.

Sir Tris'tram and Sir Pal'a-me'des.

WHILE Sir Tristram and the fair Isoude abode yet at the La Joyeuse Garde, Sir Tristram rode forth one day, without armor, having no weapon but his spear and his sword. And as he rode he came to a place where he saw two knights in battle, and one of them had gotten the better, and the other lay overthrown. The knight who had the better was Sir Palamedes. When Sir Palamedes knew Sir Tristram, he cried out, "Sir Tristram, now we be met, and ere we depart we will redress our old wrongs." "As for that," said Sir Tristram, "there never yet was Christian man that might make his boast that I ever fled from him, and thou that art a Saracen shalt never say that of me." And therewith Sir Tristram made his horse to run, and with all his might came straight upon Sir Palamedes, and broke his spear upon him. Then he drew his sword and struck at Sir Palamedes six great strokes, upon his helm. Sir Palamedes saw that Sir Tristram had not his armor on, and he marvelled at his rashness and his great folly; and said to himself, "If I meet and slay him, I am shamed wheresoever I go." Then Sir Tristram cried out, and said, "Thou coward knight, why wilt thou not do battle with me? for have thou no doubt I shall endure all thy malice." "Ah, Sir Tristram!" said Sir Palamedes, "thou knowest I may not fight with thee for shame; for thou art here naked, and I am armed; now I require that thou answer me a question that I shall ask you." "Tell me what it is," said Sir Tristram. "I put the case," said Sir Palamedes, "that you were well armed, and I naked as ye be; what would you do to me now, by your

true knighthood?" "Ah!" said Sir Tristram, "now I understand thee well, Sir Palamedes; and, as God me bless, what I shall say shall not be said for fear that I have of thee. But if it were so, thou shouldst depart from me, for I would not have to do with thee." "No more will I with thee," said Sir Palamedes, "and therefore ride forth on thy way." "As for that, I may choose," said Sir Tristram, "either to ride or to abide. But, Sir Palamedes, I marvel at one thing,—that thou art so good a knight, yet that thou wilt not be christened." "As for that," said Sir Palamedes, "I may not yet be christened, for a vow which I made many years ago; yet in my heart I believe in our Saviour and his mild mother, Mary; but I have yet one battle to do, and when that is done I will be christened with a good will." "By my head," said Sir Tristram, "as for that one battle, thou shalt seek it no longer; for yonder is a knight, whom you have smitten down. Now help me to be clothed in his armor, and I will soon fulfil thy vow." "As ye will," said Sir Palamedes, "so shall it be." So they rode both unto that knight that sat on a bank; and Sir Tristram saluted him, and he full weakly saluted him again. "Sir," said Sir Tristram, "I pray you to lend me your whole armor; for I am unarmed, and I must do battle with this knight." "Sir," said the hurt knight, "you shall have it, with a right good will." Then Sir Tristram unarmed Sir Galleron, for that was the name of the hurt knight, and he as well as he could helped to arm Sir Tristram. Then Sir Tristram mounted upon his own horse, and in his hand he took Sir Galleron's spear. Thereupon Sir Palamedes was ready, and so they came hurling together, and each smote the other in the midst of their shields. Sir Palamedes' spear broke, and Sir Tristram smote down the horse. Then Sir Palamedes leaped from his horse and drew out his sword. That saw Sir Tristram, and therewith he alighted and tied his horse to a tree. Then they came together as two wild beasts, lashing the one on the other, and so fought more than two hours; and often Sir Tristram smote such strokes at Sir Palamedes that he made him to kneel, and Sir Palamedes broke away Sir Tristram's shield, and wounded him.

"So well accomplished was each knight
To strike and to defend in fight,

Their meeting was a goodly sight,
While plate and mail held true,
The lists with planted plumes were strewn
Upon the wind at random thrown,
But helm and breast-plate bloodless shone.
It seemed their feathered crests alone
Should this encounter rue.
And ever as the combat grows
The trumpet's cheery voice arose.
Like lark's shrill song the flourish flows,
Heard while the gale of April blows,
The merry greenwood through."—SCOTT.

Then Sir Tristram was wroth out of measure, and he rushed to Sir Palamedes and wounded him passing sore through the shoulder, and by fortune smote Sir Palamedes' sword out of his hand. And if Sir Palamedes had stooped for his sword, Sir Tristram had slain him. Then Sir Palamedes stood and beheld his sword with a full sorrowful heart. "Now," said Sir Tristram, "I have thee at a vantage, as thou hadst me to-day; but it shall never be said, in court, or among good knights, that Sir Tristram did slay any knight that was weaponless; therefore take thou thy sword, and let us fight this battle to the end." Then spoke Sir Palamedes to Sir Tristram: "I have no wish to fight this battle any more. The offence that I have done unto you is not so great but that, if it please you, we may be friends. All that I have offended is for the love of the queen, La Belle Isoude, and I dare maintain that she is peerless among ladies; and for that offence ye have given me many grievous and sad strokes, and some I have given you again. Wherefore I require you, my lord Sir Tristram, forgive me all that I have offended you, and this day have me unto the next church; and first I will be clean confessed, and after that see you that I be truly baptized, and then we will ride together unto the court of my lord, King Arthur, so that we may be there at the feast of Pentecost." "Now take your horse," said Sir Tristram, "and as you have said, so shall it be done." So they took their horses, and Sir Galleron rode with them. When they came to the church of Carlisle, the bishop commanded to fill a great vessel with water; and when he had hallowed it, he then confessed Sir Palamedes clean, and christened him, and Sir Tristram and Sir Galleron were his godfathers.

"And slow up the dim aisle afar,
With sable cowl and scapular,
And snow-white stoles in order due
The Holy Fathers, two by two,
In long procession came.
Taper and host and book they bare,
And holy banner flourished fair
With the Redeemer's name.
Above the prostrate pilgrim band,
The mitred Abbot stretched his hand
And blessed them as they kneeled.
With holy cross he signed them all,
And prayed they might be sage in hall,
And fortunate in field.—SCOTT.

Then soon after they departed, and rode towards Camelot, where the noble King Arthur and Queen Guinevere were keeping a court royal. And the king and all the court were glad that Sir Palamedes was christened. Then Sir Tristram returned again to La Joyeuse Garde, and Sir Palamedes went his way.

Not long after these events Sir Gawain returned from Brittany, and related to King Arthur the adventure which befell him in the forest of Breciliande, how Merlin had there spoken to him, and enjoined him to charge the king to go without delay upon the quest of the Holy Grail. While King Arthur deliberated, Tristram determined to enter upon the quest, and the more readily, as it was well known to him that this holy adventure would, if achieved, procure him pardon of all his sins. He immediately departed for the kingdom of Brittany, hoping there to obtain from Merlin counsel as to the proper course to pursue to insure success.

CHAPTER XVII.

Sir Tris'tram—I-soude' of the White Hands—The Death of Tris'tram.

Sir Tris'tram.

On arriving in Brittany Tristram found King Hoel engaged in a war with a rebellious vassal, and hard pressed by his enemy. His best knights had fallen in a late battle, and he knew not where to turn for assistance. Tristram volunteered his aid. It was accepted; and the army of Hoel, led by Tristram, and inspired by his example, gained a complete victory. The king, penetrated by the most lively sentiments of gratitude, and having informed himself of Tristram's birth, offered him his daughter in marriage. The princess was beautiful and accomplished, and bore the same name with the Queen of Cornwall; but this one is designated by the Romancers as

I-soude' of the White Hands

to distinguish her from the Isoude of whom we have been reading, who was known as Isoude the Fair.

> "Isoude of Brittany? but where
> Is that other Isoude fair,
> That proud first Isoude, Cornwall's Queen?"
>
> —Matthew Arnold.

How can we describe the conflict that agitated the heart of

Tristram? He adored the first Isoude, but his love for her was hopeless, and not unaccompanied by remorse. Moreover, the sacred quest on which he had now entered demanded of him perfect purity of life. It seemed as if a happy destiny had provided for him, in the charming princess Isoude of the White Hands, the best security for all his good resolutions. This last reflection determined him. They were married, and passed some months in tranquil happiness at the court of King Hoel. The pleasure which Tristram felt in his wife's society increased day by day. An inward grace seemed to stir within him from the moment when he took the oath to go on the quest of the Holy Grail; it seemed even to triumph over the power of the magic love-potion.

The war, which had been quelled for a time, now burst out anew. Tristram, as usual, was foremost in every danger. The enemy was worsted in successive conflicts, and at last shut himself up in his principal city. Tristram led on the attack of the city. As he mounted a ladder to scale the walls, he was struck on the head by a fragment of rock, which the besieged threw down upon him. It bore him to the ground, where he lay insensible.

As soon as he recovered consciousness, he demanded to be carried to his wife. The princess, skilled in the art of surgery, would not suffer any one but herself to touch her beloved husband. Her fair hands bound up his wounds; Tristram kissed them with gratitude, which began to grow into love. At first the devoted cares of Isoude seemed to meet with great success; but after a while these flattering appearances vanished, and, in spite of all her care, the malady grew more serious day by day.

In this perplexity, an old squire of Tristram's reminded his master that the princess of Ireland, afterwards queen of Cornwall, had once cured him under circumstances quite as discouraging. He called Isoude of the White Hands to him, told her of his former cure, added that he believed that the Queen Isoude could heal him, and that he felt sure that she would come to his relief if sent for.

Isoude of the White Hands consented that Gesnes, a trusty man and skilful navigator, should be sent to Cornwall. Tristram

called him, and, giving him a ring, "Take this," he said, "to the queen of Cornwall. Tell her that Tristram, near to death, demands her aid. If you succeed in bringing her with you, place white sails to your vessel on your return, that we may know of your success when the vessel first heaves in sight. But if Queen Isoude refuses, put on black sails; they will be the presage of my impending death."

Gesnes performed his mission successfully. King Mark happened to be absent from his capital, and the queen readily consented to return with the bark to Brittany. Gesnes clothed his vessel in the whitest of sails, and sped his way back to Brittany.

Meantime the wound of Tristram grew more desperate day by day. His strength, quite prostrated, no longer permitted him to be carried to the seaside daily, as had been his custom from the first moment when it was possible for the bark to be on the way homeward. He called a young damsel, and gave her in charge to keep watch in the direction of Cornwall, and to come and tell him the color of the sails of the first vessel she should see approaching.

When Isoude of the White Hands consented that the queen of Cornwall should be sent for, she had not known all the reasons which she had for fearing the influence which renewed intercourse with that princess might have on her own happiness. She had now learned more, and felt the danger more keenly. She thought, if she could only keep the knowledge of the queen's arrival from her husband, she might employ in his service any resources which her skill could supply, and still avert the dangers which she apprehended:

> "Raise the light, my page, that I may see her.
> Thou art come at last, then, haughty Queen,
> Long I've waited, long I've fought my fever,
> Late thou comest, cruel thou hast been."
>
> —MATTHEW ARNOLD.

When the vessel was seen approaching, with its white sails sparkling in the sun, the damsel, by command of her mistress, carried word to Tristram that the sails were black.

Tristram, penetrated with inexpressible grief, breathed a pro-

found sigh, turned away his face, and said, "Alas, my beloved! we shall never see one another again!" Then he commended himself to God, and breathed his last.

The Death of Tris'tram.

The death of Tristram was the first intelligence which the queen of Cornwall heard on landing. She was conducted almost senseless into the chamber of Tristram, and expired holding him in her arms.

"She comes! she comes!—like flash of flame,
Can lovers' footsteps fly;
She comes! she comes!—she only came
To see her Tristram die.

"She saw him die; her latest sigh,
Joined in a kiss his parting breath,
The greatest pair, that Britain bare,
United are in death."—SCOTT.

Tristram, before his death, had requested that his body should be sent to Cornwall, and that his sword, with a letter he had written, should be delivered to King Mark. The remains of Tristram and Isoude were embarked in a vessel, along with the sword, which was presented to the king of Cornwall. He was melted with tenderness when he saw the weapon which slew Moraunt of Ireland—which had so often saved his life and redeemed the honor of his kingdom. In the letter Tristram begged pardon of his uncle, and related the story of the amorous draught.

Mark ordered the lovers to be buried in his own chapel.

"But since living we were ununited,
Go not far, O Isoude, from my grave."
—MATTHEW ARNOLD.

From the tomb of Tristram there sprang a vine which went along the walls and descended into the grave of the queen. It was cut down three times, but each time sprung up again more vigorous than before, and this wonderful plant has ever since shaded the tombs of Tristram and Isoude.

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CHAPTER XVIII.

Per'ce-val.

Per'ce-val.

The father and two elder brothers of Perceval had fallen in battle or tournaments, and hence, as the last hope of his family, his mother retired with him into a solitary region, where he was brought up in total ignorance of arms and chivalry. He was allowed no weapon but "a lyttel Scots spere," which was the only thing of all "her lordes faire gere" that his mother carried to the wood with her. In the use of this he became so skilful, that he could kill with it not only the animals of the chase for her table, but even birds on the wing. At length, however, Perceval was roused to a desire of military renown by seeing in the forest five knights who were in complete armor. He said to his mother, "Mother, what are those yonder?" "They are angels, my son," said she. "By my faith, I will go and become an angel with them." And Perceval went to the road and met them. "Tell me good lad," said one of them, "sawest thou a knight pass this way either to-day or yesterday?" "I know not," said he, "what a knight is." "Such an one as I am," said the knight. "If thou wilt tell me what I ask thee, I will tell thee what thou askest me." "Gladly will I do so," said Sir Owain, for that was the knight's name. "What is this?" demanded Perceval, touching the saddle. "It is a saddle," said Owain. Then he asked about all the accoutrements

which he saw upon the men and the horses, and about the arms, and what they were for, and how they were used. And Sir Owain showed him all those things fully. And Perceval in return gave him such information as he had.

Then Perceval returned to his mother, and said to her, "Mother, those were not angels, but honorable knights." Then his mother swooned away. And Perceval went to the place where they kept the horses that carried firewood and provisions for the castle. And he pressed a pack into the form of a saddle, and with twisted twigs he imitated the trappings which he had seen upon the horses. When he came again to his mother, the countess had recovered from her swoon. "My son," said she, "desirest thou to ride forth?" "Yes, with thy leave," said he. "Go forward then," she said, "to the court of Arthur, where there are the best and the noblest and the most bountiful of men, and tell him thou art Perceval, the son of Pelenore, and ask of him to bestow knighthood on thee. And whenever thou seest a church, repeat there thy pater-noster; and if thou see meat and drink, and hast need of them, thou mayest take them. If thou hear an outcry of one in distress, proceed toward it, especially if it be the cry of a woman, and render her what service thou canst. If thou see a fair jewel, win it, for thus shalt thou acquire fame; yet freely give it to another, for thus thou shalt obtain praise. If thou see a fair woman, pay court to her, for thus thou wilt obtain love."

After this discourse Perceval mounted the horse, and, taking a number of sharp-pointed sticks in his hand, he rode forth. And he rode far in the woody wilderness without food or drink. At last he came to an opening in the wood, where he saw a tent, and as he thought it might be a church he said his pater-noster to it. And he went towards it; and the door of the tent was open. And Perceval dismounted and entered the tent. In the tent he found a maiden sitting, with a golden frontlet on her forehead and a gold ring on her hand. And Perceval said, "Maiden, I salute you, for my mother told me whenever I met a lady I must respectfully salute her." Perceiving in one corner of the tent some food, two flasks full of wine, and some boar's-flesh roasted, he said, "My mother told me, wherever I saw meat and drink, to take it." And he ate greedily, for he was

very hungry. The maiden said, "Sir, thou hadst best go quickly from here, for fear that my friends should come, and evil should befall you." But Perceval said, "My mother told me, wheresoever I saw a fair jewel, to take it," and he took the gold ring from her finger, and put it on his own; and he gave the maiden his own ring in exchange for her's; then he mounted his horse and rode away.

Perceval journeyed on till he arrived at Arthur's court. And it so happened that just at that time an uncourteous knight had offered Queen Guinevere a gross insult. For when her page was serving the queen with a golden goblet, this knight struck the arm of the page and dashed the wine in the queen's face and over her stomacher. Then he said, "If any have boldness to avenge this insult to Guinevere, let him follow me to the meadow." So the knight took his horse and rode to the meadow, carrying away the golden goblet. And all the household hung down their heads, and no one offered to follow the knight to take vengeance upon him.

"Though every knight
Was black with rage, not one would follow."

For it seemed to them that no one would have ventured on so daring an outrage unless he possessed such powers, through magic or charms, that none could be able to punish him. Just then, behold, Perceval entered the hall upon the bony, piebald horse, with his uncouth trappings. In the centre of the hall stood Kay the Seneschal. "Tell me, tall man," said Perceval, "is that Arthur yonder?" "What wouldst thou with Arthur?" asked Kay. "My mother told me to go to Arthur and receive knighthood from him." "By my faith," said he, "thou art all too meanly equipped with horse and with arms." Then all the household began to jeer and laugh at him. But there was a certain damsel who had been a whole year at Arthur's court, and had never been known to smile. And the king's fool[1] had

[1] A fool was a common appendage of the courts of those days when this romance was written. A fool was the ornament held in next estimation to a dwarf. He wore a white dress with a yellow bonnet, and carried a bell or bawble in his hand. Though called a fool, his words were often weighed and remembered.

said that this damsel would not smile till she had seen him who would be the flower of chivalry. Now this damsel came up to Perceval and told him, smiling, that, if he lived, he would be one of the bravest and best of knights. "Truly," said Kay, "thou art ill taught to remain a year at Arthur's court, with choice of society, and smile on no one, and now before the face of Arthur and all his knights to call such a man as this the flower of knighthood;" and he gave her a box on the ear that she fell senseless to the ground. Then said Kay to Perceval, "Go after the knight who went hence to the meadow, overthrow him and recover the golden goblet, and possess thyself of his horse and arms, and thou shalt have knighthood." "I will do so, tall man," said Perceval. So he turned his horse's head toward the meadow. And when he came there, the knight was riding up and down, proud of his strength and valor and noble mien. "Tell me," said the knight, "didst thou see any one coming after me from the court?" "The tall man that was there," said Perceval, "told me to come and overthrow thee, and take from thee the goblet, and thy horse and armor for myself." "Silence!" said the knight; "go back to the court, and tell Arthur either to come himself, or to send some other to fight with me; and unless he do so quickly, I will not wait for him." "By my faith," said Perceval "choose thou whether it shall be willingly or unwillingly, for I will have the horse and the arms and the goblet." Upon this the knight ran at him furiously, and struck him a violent blow with the shaft of his spear, between the neck and the shoulder. "Ha, ha, lad!" said Perceval, "my mother's servants were not used to play with me in this wise; so thus will I play with thee." And he threw at him one of his sharp-pointed sticks, and it struck him in the eye, and came out at the back of his head, so that he fell down lifeless.

"Verily," said Sir Owain, the son of Urien, to Kay the Seneschal, "thou wast ill advised to send that madman after the knight, for he must either be overthrown or flee, and either way it will be a disgrace to Arthur and his warriors; therefore will I go to see what has befallen him." So Sir Owain went to the meadow, and he found Perceval trying in vain to get the dead knight's armor off, in order to clothe himself with it. Sir Owain unfastened the armor, and helped Perceval to put it on,

and taught him how to put his foot in the stirrup, and use the spur; for Perceval had never used stirrup nor spur, but rode without saddle, and urged on his horse with a stick. Then Owain would have had him return to the court to receive the praise that was his due; but Perceval said, "I will not come to the court till I have encountered the tall man that is there, to revenge the injury he did to the maiden. But take thou the goblet to Queen Guinevere, and tell King Arthur that, wherever I am, I will be his vassal, and will do him what profit and service I can." And Sir Owain went back to the court, and related all these things to Arthur and Guinevere, and to all the household.

And Perceval rode forward. And he came to a lake, on the side of which was a fair castle, and on the border of the lake he saw a hoary-headed man sitting upon a velvet cushion, and his attendants were fishing in the lake. When the hoary-headed man beheld Perceval approaching, he arose and went into the castle. Perceval rode to the castle, and the door was open, and he entered the hall. And the hoary-headed man received Perceval courteously, and asked him to sit by him on the cushion. When it was time, the tables were set, and they went to meat. And when they had finished their meat, the hoary-headed man asked Perceval if he knew how to fight with the sword. "I know not," said Perceval, "but were I to be taught, doubtless I should." And the hoary-headed man said to him, "I am thy uncle, thy mother's brother; I am called King Pecheur.[1] Thou shalt remain with me a space, in order to learn the manners and customs of different countries, and courtesy and noble bearing. And this do thou remember, If thou seest aught to cause thy wonder, ask not the meaning of it; if no one has the courtesy to inform thee, the reproach will not fall upon thee, but upon me that am thy teacher." While Perceval and his uncle discoursed together, Perceval beheld two youths enter the hall, bearing a golden cup and a spear of mighty size, with blood dropping from its point to the ground. And when all the company saw this, they began to weep and lament. But for all that, the man did not break off his discourse with Perceval. And as he did not tell him the meaning of what he saw, he forbore to

[1] Fisher or sinner.

ask him concerning it. Now the cup that Perceval saw was the Sangreal, and the spear the sacred spear; and afterwards King Pecheur removed with those sacred relics into a far country.

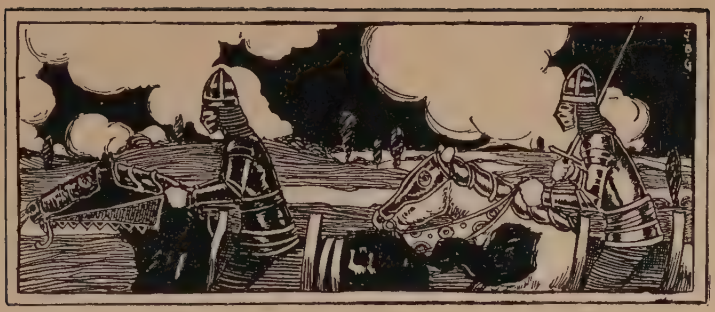
One evening Perceval entered a valley, and came to a hermit's cell; and the hermit welcomed him gladly, and there he spent the night. And in the morning he arose, and when he went forth, behold! a shower of snow had fallen in the night, and a hawk had killed a wild-fowl in front of the cell. And the noise of the horse had scared the hawk away, and a raven alighted on the bird. And Perceval stood and compared the blackness of the raven and the whiteness of the snow and the redness of the blood to the hair of the lady that best he loved, which was blacker than jet, and to her skin, which was whiter than the snow, and to the two red spots upon her cheeks, which were redder than the blood upon the snow.

Now Arthur and his household were in search of Perceval, and by chance they came that way. "Know ye," said Arthur, "who is the knight with the long spear that stands by the brook up yonder?" "Lord," said one of them, "I will go and learn who he is." So the youth came to the place where Perceval was, and asked him what he did thus, and who he was. But Perceval was so intent upon his thought that he gave him no answer. Then the youth thrust at Perceval with his lance; and Perceval turned upon him, and struck him to the ground. And when the youth returned to the king, and told how rudely he had been treated, Sir Kay said, "I will go myself." And when he greeted Perceval, and got no answer, he spoke to him rudely and angrily. And Perceval thrust at him with his lance, and cast him down so that he broke his arm and his shoulder-blade. And while he lay thus stunned, his horse returned back at a wild and prancing pace.

Then said Sir Gawain, surnamed the Golden-Tongued, because he was the most courteous knight in Arthur's court: "It is not fitting that any should disturb an honorable knight from his thought unadvisedly; for either he is pondering some damage that he has sustained, or he is thinking of the lady whom best he loves. If it seem well to thee, lord, I will go and see if this knight has changed from his thought, and if he has, I will ask him courteously to come and visit thee."

And Perceval was resting on the shaft of his spear, pondering the same thought, and Sir Gawain came to him and said: "If I thought it would be as agreeable to thee as it would be to me, I would converse with thee. I have also a message from Arthur unto thee, to pray thee to come and visit him. And two men have been before on this errand." "That is true," said Perceval; "and uncourteously they came. They attacked me, and I was annoyed thereat." Then he told him the thought that occupied his mind, and Gawain said, "This was not an ungentle thought, and I should marvel if it were pleasant for thee to be drawn from it." Then said Perceval, "Tell me, is Sir Kay in Arthur's court?" "He is," said Gawain; "and truly he is the knight who fought with thee last." "Verily," said Perceval, "I am not sorry to have thus avenged the insult to the smiling maiden." Then Perceval told him his name, and said, "Who art thou?" And he replied, "I am Gawain." "I am right glad to meet thee," said Perceval, "for I have everywhere heard of thy prowess and uprightness; and I solicit thy fellowship." "Thou shalt have it, by my faith; and grant me thine," said he. "Gladly will I do so," answered Perceval.

So they went together to Arthur, and saluted him. "Behold, lord," said Gawain, "him whom thou hast sought so long." "Welcome unto thee, chieftain," said Arthur. And hereupon there came the queen and her handmaidens, and Perceval saluted them. And they were rejoiced to see him, and bade him welcome. And Arthur did him great honor and respect, and they returned towards Caerleon.



CHAPTER XIX.

The San'gre-al, or Holy Grail—Sir Gal'a-had—Sir Ga'wain.

The San'gre-al, or Holy Grail.

The Sangreal was the cup from which our Saviour drank at his last supper. He was supposed to have given it to Joseph of Arimathea, who carried it to Europe, together with the spear with which the soldier pierced the Saviour's side. From generation to generation, one of the descendants of Joseph of Arimathea had been devoted to the guardianship of these precious relics; but on the sole condition of leading a life of purity in thought, word, and deed.

> "The cup, the cup itself, from which our Lord
> Drank at the last supper with his own.
> This, from the blessed land of Aromat—
> After the day of darkness, when the dead
> Went wandering o'er Moriah, the good saint,
> Arimathæan Joseph, journeying brought
> To Glastonbury, where the winter thorn
> Blossoms at Christmas, mindful of our Lord,
> And there awhile it bode; and if a man
> Could touch or see it, he was heal'd at once,
> By faith, of all his ills."—The Holy Grail.

For a long time the Sangreal was visible to all pilgrims, and its presence conferred blessings upon the land in which it was preserved. But at length one of those holy men to whom its guardianship had descended, so far forgot the obligation of his sacred office as to look with unhallowed eye upon a young female

pilgrim whose robe was accidentally loosened as she knelt before him. The sacred lance instantly punished his frailty, spontaneously falling upon him, and inflicting a deep wound. The marvellous wound could by no means be healed, and the guardian of the Sangreal was ever after called "Le Roi Pescheur"—the Sinner King. The Sangreal withdrew its visible presence from the crowds who came to worship, and an iron age succeeded to the happiness which its presence had diffused among the tribes of Britain.

"But then the times
Grew to such evil that the Holy cup
Was caught away to heaven and disappear'd."
—THE HOLY GRAIL.

We have told in the history of Merlin how that great prophet and enchanter sent a message to King Arthur by Sir Gawain, directing him to undertake the recovery of the Sangreal, informing him at the same time that the knight who should accomplish that sacred quest was already born, and of a suitable age to enter upon it. Sir Gawain delivered his message, and the king was anxiously revolving in his mind how best to achieve the enterprise, when, at the vigil of Pentecost, all the fellowship of the Round Table being met together at Camelot, as they sat at meat, suddenly there was heard a clap of thunder, and then a bright light burst forth, and every knight, as he looked on his fellow, saw him, in seeming, fairer than ever before. All the hall was filled with sweet odors, and every knight had such meat and drink as he best loved. Then there entered into the hall the Holy Grail, covered with white samite, so that none could see it, and it passed through the hall suddenly, and disappeared.

"And all at once, as there we sat, we heard
A cracking and a riving of the roofs,
And rending, and a blast, and overhead
Thunder, and in the thunder was a cry,
And in the blast there smote along the hall
A beam of light seven times more clear than day:
And down the long beam stole the Holy Grail
All over covered with a luminous cloud,
And none might see who bare it, and it past.
But every knight beheld his fellow's face
As in a glory, and all the knights arose,
And staring each at other like dumb men
Stood."—THE HOLY GRAIL.

During this time no one spoke a word, but when they had recovered breath to speak, King Arthur said, "Certainly we ought greatly to thank the Lord for what he hath showed us this day." Then Sir Gawain rose up, and made a vow that for twelve months and a day he would seek the Sangreal, and not return till he had seen it, if so he might speed. When they of the Round Table heard Sir Gawain say so, they arose, the most part of them, and vowed the same.

> "I sware a vow before them all, that I,
> Because I had not seen the Grail, would ride
> A twelvemonth and a day in quest of it,
> Until I found and saw it, as the nun
> My sister saw it; and Galahad sware the vow,
> And good Sir Bors, our Launcelot's cousin, sware,
> And Launcelot sware, and many among the knights,
> And Gawain sware, and louder than the rest."
>
> —THE HOLY GRAIL.

When King Arthur heard this, he was greatly displeased, for he knew well that they might not gainsay their vows. "Alas!" said he to Sir Gawain, "you have nigh slain me with the vow and promise that ye have made, for ye have bereft me of the fairest fellowship that ever were seen together in any realm of the world; for when they shall depart hence, I am sure that all shall never meet more in this world."

> "Then when he asked us, knight by knight, if any
> Had seen it, all their answers were as one,
> 'Nay, Lord, and therefore have we sworn our vows.'
> "'Lo, now,' said Arthur, 'have ye seen a cloud?
> What go ye into the wilderness to see?'
> "Then Galahad on the sudden, and in a voice
> Shrilling along the hall to Arthur, call'd,
> 'But I, Sir Arthur, saw the Holy Grail,
> I saw the Holy Grail and heard a cry—
> O Galahad, and O Galahad, follow me.'"—THE HOLY GRAIL.

Sir Gal'a-had.

At that time there entered the hall a good old man, and with him he brought a young knight, and these words he said: "Peace be with you, fair lords." Then the old man said unto King Arthur, "Sir, I bring you here a young knight that is of

kings' lineage, and of the kindred of Joseph of Arimathea, being the son of Dame Elaine, the daughter of King Pelles, king of the foreign country." Now the name of the young knight was Sir Galahad, and he was the son of Sir Launcelot du Lac; but he had dwelt with his mother, at the court of King Pelles, his grandfather, till now he was old enough to bear arms, and his mother had sent him in the charge of a holy hermit to King Arthur's court. Then Sir Launcelot beheld his son, and had great joy of him. And Sir Bohort told his fellows, "Upon my life, this young knight shall come to great worship." The noise was great in all the court, so that it came to the queen. And she said, "I would fain see him, for he must needs be a noble knight, for so is his father." And the queen and her ladies all said that he resembled much unto his father; and he was seemly and demure as a dove, with all manner of good features, that in the whole world men might not find his match. And King Arthur said, "God make him a good man, for beauty faileth him not, as any that liveth."

"'God make thee good as thou art beautiful,'
Said Arthur, when he dubb'd him knight; and none
In so young youth was ever made a knight
Till Galahad; and this Galahad, when he heard
My sister's vision, filled me with amaze;
His eyes became so like her own, they seem'd
Hers. and himself her brother more than I.

"Sister or brother none had he; but some
Call'd him a son of Launcelot, and some said
Begotten by enchantment,—chatterers, they,
Like birds of passage piping up and down
That gape for flies,—we know not whence they come."

—THE HOLY GRAIL.

Then the hermit led the young knight to the Siege Perilous; and he lifted up the cloth, and found there letters that said, "This is the seat of Sir Galahad, the good knight;" and he made him sit in that seat. And all the knights of the Round Table marvelled greatly at Sir Galahad, seeing him sit securely in that seat, and said, "This is he by whom the Sangreal shall be achieved, for there never sat one before in that seat without being mischieved."

Sir Galahad.

"In our great hall there stood a vacant chair,
Fashion'd by Merlin ere he past away,
And carven with strange figures; and in and out
The figures, like a serpent, ran a scroll
Of letters in a tongue no man could read.
And Merlin call'd it 'The Siege Perilous,'
Perilous for good and ill; 'for there,' he said,
'No man could sit but he should lose himself:'
And once by misadvertence Merlin sat
In his own chair, and so was lost; but he,
Galahad, when he heard of Merlin's doom,
Cried, 'If I lose myself I save myself!'"

—THE HOLY GRAIL.

On the next day the king said, "Now, at this quest of the Sangreal shall all ye of the Round Table depart, and never shall I see you again altogether; therefore I will that ye all repair to the meadow of Camelot, for to just and tourney yet once more before ye depart." But all the meaning of the king was to see Sir Galahad proven. So then were they all assembled in the meadow. Then Sir Galahad, by request of the king and queen, put on his harness and his helm, but shield would he take none for any prayer of the king. And the queen was in a tower, with all her ladies, to behold that tournament. Then Sir Galahad rode into the midst of the meadow; and there he began to break spears marvellously, so that all men had wonder of him, for he surmounted all knights that encountered with him, except two, Sir Launcelot and Sir Perceval.

"So many knights, that all the people cried,
And almost burst the barriers in their heat,
Shouting 'Sir Galahad and Sir Perceval!'"

—SIR GALAHAD.

Then the king, at the queen's request, made him to alight, and presented him to the queen; and she said, "Never two men resembled one another more than he and Sir Launcelot, and therefore it is no marvel that he is like him in prowess."

Then the king and the queen went to the minster, and the knights followed them. And after the service was done, they put on their helms and departed, and there was great sorrow. They rode through the streets of Camelot, and there was weeping of the rich and poor; and the king turned away, and might

not speak for weeping. And so they departed, and every knight took the way that him best liked.

Sir Galahad rode forth without shield, and rode four days, and found no adventure. And on the fourth day he came to a white abbey; and there he was received with great reverence, and led to a chamber.

"When down the stormy crescent goes,
A light before me swims,
Between dark stems the forest glows,
I hear a noise of hymns:
Then by some secret shrine I ride;
I hear a voice, but none are there;
The stalls are void, the doors are wide,
The tapers burning fair.
Fair gleams the snowy altar-cloth,
The silver vessels sparkle clean,
The shrill bell rings, the censer swings,
And solemn chants resound between.

"The clouds have broken in the sky,
And through the mountain walls
A rolling organ-harmony
Swells up and shakes and falls.
Then move the trees, the copses nod,
Wings flutter, voices hover clear.

"'O just and faithful knight of God!
Ride on! the prize is near.'
So pass I hostel, hall, and grange;
By bridge and ford, by park and pale,
All-arm'd I ride, whate'er betide,
Until I find the Holy Grail."—SIR GALAHAD.

He met there two knights, King Bagdemagus and Sir Uwaine, and they made of him great solace. "Sirs," said Sir Galahad, "what adventure brought you hither?" "Sir," said they, "it is told us that within this place is a shield, which no man may bear unless he be worthy; and if one unworthy should attempt to bear it, it shall surely do him a mischief." Then King Bagdemagus said, "I fear not to bear it, and that shall ye see to-morrow."

So on the morrow they arose, and heard mass; then King Bagdemagus asked where the adventurous shield was. Anon a monk led him behind an altar, where the shield hung, as white as snow; but in the midst there was a red cross. Then King Bagdemagus took the shield, and bear it out of the mintser; and

he said to Sir Galahad, "If it please you, abide here till ye know how I shall speed."

Then King Bagdemagus and his squire rode forth; and when they had ridden a mile or two, they saw a goodly knight come towards them, in white armor, horse and all; and he came as fast as his horse might run, with his spear in the rest; and King Bagdemagus directed his spear against him, and broke it upon the white knight, but the other struck him so hard that he broke the mails, and thrust him through the right shoulder, for the shield covered him not, and so he bare him from his horse. Then the white knight turned his horse and rode away.

Then the squire went to King Bagdemagus, and asked him whether he were sore wounded or not. "I am sore wounded," said he, "and full hardly shall I escape death." Then the squire set him on his horse, and brought him to an abbey; and there he was taken down softly, and unarmed, and laid in a bed, and his wound was looked to, for he lay there long, and hardly escaped with his life. And the squire brought the shield back to the abbey.

The next day Sir Galahad took the shield, and within a while he came to the hermitage, where he met the white knight, and each saluted the other courteously. "Sir," said Sir Galahad, "can you tell me the marvel of the shield?" "Sir," said the white knight, "that shield belonged of old to the gentle knight, Joseph of Arimathea; and when he came to die he said, 'Never shall man bear this shield about his neck but he shall repent it, unto the time that Sir Galahad the good knight bear it, the last of my lineage, the which shall do many marvellous deeds.'" And then the white knight vanished away.

Sir Ga'wain.

After Sir Gawain departed, he rode many days, both toward and forward, and at last he came to the abbey where Sir Galahad took the white shield. And they told Sir Gawain of the marvellous adventure that Sir Galahad had done. "Truly," said Sir Gawain, "I am not happy that I took not the way that he went, for, if I may meet with him, I will not part from him lightly, that I may partake with him all the marvellous adventures which he shall achieve." "Sir," said one of the monks,

"he will not be of your fellowship." "Why?" said Sir Gawain. "Sir," said he, "because ye be sinful and he is blissful." Then said the monk, "Sir Gawain, thou must do penance for thy sins." "Sir, what penance shall I do?" "Such as I will show," said the good man. "Nay," said Sir Gawain, "I will do no penance, for we knights adventurous often suffer great woe and pain." "Well," said the good man; and he held his peace. And Sir Gawain departed.

Now it happened, not long after this, that Sir Gawain and Sir Hector rode together, and they came to a castle where was a great tournament. And Sir Gawain and Sir Hector joined themselves to the party that seemed the weaker, and they drove before them the other party. Then suddenly came into the lists a knight bearing a white shield with a red cross, and by adventure he came by Sir Gawain, and he smote him so hard that he clave his helm and wounded his head, so that Sir Gawain fell to the earth. When Sir Hector saw that, he knew that the knight with the white shield was Sir Galahad, and he thought it no wisdom to abide him, and also for natural love, that he was his uncle. Then Sir Galahad retired privily, so that none knew where he had gone. And Sir Hector raised up Sir Gawain and said, "Sir, me seemeth your quest is done." "It is done," said Sir Gawain; "I shall seek no further."

> "'Nay, lord,' said Gawain, 'not for such as I.
> Therefore I communed with a saintly man,
> Who made me sure the quest was not for me.
> For I was much awearied of the quest.
> But found a silk pavilion in a field,
> And merry maidens in it; and then this gale
> Tore my pavilion from the tenting-pin,
> And blew my merry maidens all about
> With all discomfort; yea, and but for this
> My twelvemonth and a day were pleasant to me."
>
> —THE HOLY GRAIL.

Then Gawain was borne into the castle, and unarmed, and laid in a rich bed, and a leech found to search his wound. And Sir Gawain and Sir Hector abode together, for Sir Hector would not away till Sir Gawain were whole.

Sir Gawain was a knight devoted to the pleasures of life. The religious side of knighthood gave him no concern.

CHAPTER XX.

The San'gre-al (Continued).

Sir Launcelot.

Sir Launcelot rode overthwart and endlong in a wide forest, and held no path but as wild adventure led him.

"My golden spurs now bring to me,
And bring to me my richest mail,
For to-morrow I go over land and sea
In search of the Holy, Holy Grail.
Shall never a bed for me be spread,
Nor shall a pillow be under my head,
Till I begin my vow to keep.
Here on the rushes will I sleep,
And perchance there may come a vision true
Ere day create the world anew."—Lowell's Holy Grail.

And at last he came to a stone cross. Then Sir Launcelot looked round him and saw an old chapel. So he tied his horse to a tree, and put off his shield, and hung it upon a tree; and then he went unto the chapel, and looked through a place where the wall was broken. And within he saw a fair altar, full richly arrayed with cloth of silk; and there stood a fair candlestick, which bare six great candles, and the candlestick was of silver. When Sir Launcelot saw this sight, he had a great wish to enter

the chapel, but he could find no place where he might enter. Then was he passing heavy and dismayed. And he returned and came again to his horse, and took off his saddle and his bridle and let him pasture, and unlaced his helm, and ungirded his sword, and laid him down to sleep upon his shield before the cross.

And as he lay, half-waking and half-sleeping, he saw come by him two palfreys, both fair and white, which bare a litter, on which lay a sick knight. And when he was nigh the cross he there abode still. And Sir Launcelot heard him say, "O sweet Lord, when shall this sorrow leave me, and when shall the holy vessel come by me whereby I shall be healed?" And thus a great while complained the knight, and Sir Launcelot heard it. Then Sir Launcelot saw the candlestick, with the lighted tapers, come before the cross, but he could see nobody that brought it. Also there came a salver of silver and the holy vessel of the Sangreal; and therewithal the sick knight sat him upright, and held up both his hands, and said, "Fair, sweet Lord, which is here within the holy vessel, take heed to me, that I may be whole of this great malady." And therewith, upon his hands and upon his knees, he went so nigh that he touched the holy vessel and kissed it. And anon he was whole. Then the holy vessel went into the chapel again, with the candlestick and the light, so that Sir Launcelot wist not what became of it.

Then the sick knight rose up and kissed the cross; and anon his squire brought him his arms, and asked his lord how he did. "I thank God right heartily," said he, "for, through the holy vessel, I am healed. But I have great marvel of this sleeping knight, who hath had neither grace nor power to awake during the time that the holy vessel hath been here present." "I dare it right well say," said the squire, "that this same knight is stained with some manner of deadly sin, whereof he was never confessed." So they departed.

Then anon Sir Launcelot waked, and set himself upright, and bethought him of what he had seen, and whether it were dreams or not. And he was passing heavy, and wist not what to do. And he said: "My sin and my wretchedness hath brought me great dishonor. For when I sought worldly adventures and worldly desires, I ever achieved them, and had the

better in every place, and never was I discomforted in any quarrel, were it right or wrong. And now I take upon me the adventure of holy things, I see and understand that mine old sin hindereth me, so that I had no power to stir nor to speak when the holy blood appeared before me."

> "But in me lived a sin
> So strange, of such a kind, that all of pure,
> Noble, and knightly in me twined and clung
> Round that one sin, until the wholesome flower
> And poisonous grew together, each as each,
> Not to be pluck'd asunder."—THE HOLY GRAIL.

So thus he sorrowed till it was day, and heard the fowls of the air sing. Then was he somewhat comforted.

Then he departed from the cross into the forest. And there he found a hermitage, and a hermit therein, who was going to mass. So when mass was done, Sir Launcelot called the hermit to him, and prayed him for charity to hear his confession. "With a good will," said the good man. And then he told that good man all his life, and how he had loved a queen unmeasurably many years. "And all my great deeds of arms that I have done, I did the most part for the queen's sake, and for her sake would I do battle, were it right or wrong, and never did I battle all only for God's sake, but for to win worship, and to cause me to be better beloved; and little or naught I thanked God for it. I pray you counsel me."

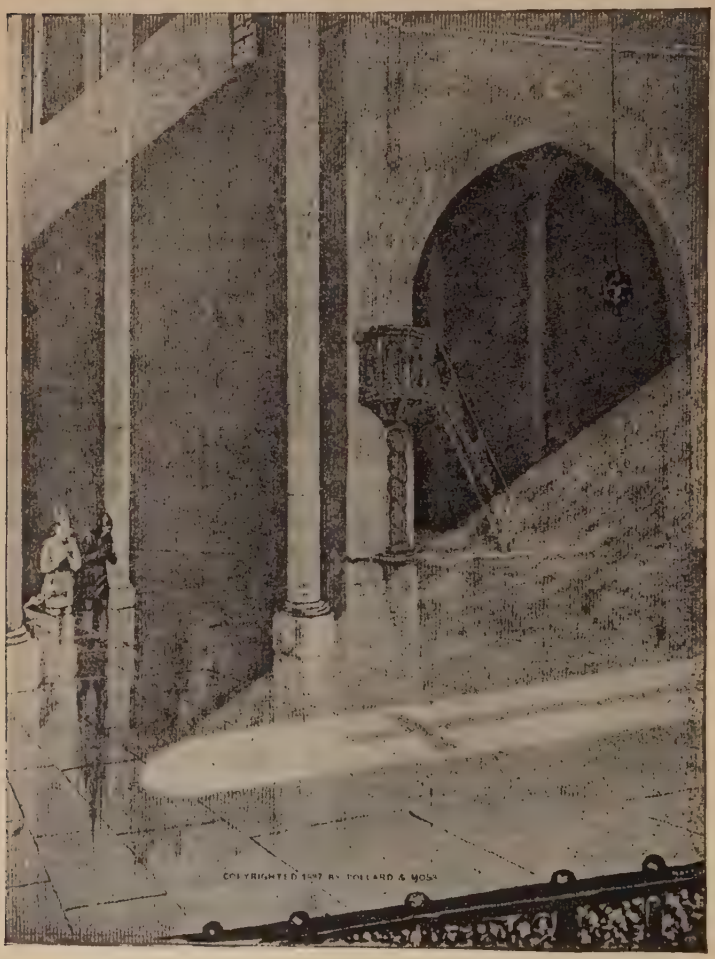
"I will counsel you," said the hermit, "if ye will insure me that ye will never come in that queen's fellowship as much as ye may forbear." And then Sir Launcelot promised the hermit, by his faith, that he would no more come in her company. "Look that your heart and your mouth accord," said the good man, "and I shall insure you that ye shall have more worship than ever ye had."

Then the good man enjoined Sir Launcelot such penance as he might do, and he assoiled Sir Launcelot, and made him abide with him all that day. And Sir Launcelot repented him greatly.

Sir Per'ce-val.

Sir Perceval's journey lay through a low, deep valley. He had not gone far before he met a hermit, who lived in a hermit-

age near to a chapel. The hermit, knowing his mission, told him that, unlike Sir Galahad, he did not possess the humility necessary to see the Holy Grail. While he was speaking,



Knightly Devotion.

"In silver armor suddenly Galahad shone
Before us, and against the chapel door

Laid lance, and entered, and we knelt in prayer.
And there the hermit slaked my burning thirst;
And at the sacring of the mass I saw
The holy elements alone."—THE HOLY GRAIL.

The vision passed in a moment, and Sir Perceval was left alone to resume his journey. While still riding through the valley he met twenty men in armor. When they saw the knight they asked him whence he was; and he answered, "Of the court of King Arthur." Then they cried all at once, "Slay him." But Sir Perceval smote the first to the earth, and his horse upon him. Then seven of the knights smote upon his shield all at once, and the remnant slew his horse, so that he fell to the earth. So had they slain him or taken him, had not the good knight Sir Galahad, with the red cross, come there by adventure. And when he saw all the knights upon one, he cried out, "Save me that knight's life." Then he rode toward the twenty men of arms as fast as his horse might drive, with his spear in the rest, and smote the foremost horse and man to the earth. And when his spear was broken, he set his hand to his sword, and smote on the right hand and on the left, that it was marvel to see; and at every stroke he smote down one, or put him to rebuke, so that they would fight no more, but fled to a thick forest, and Sir Galahad followed them. And when Sir Perceval saw him chase them so, he made great sorrow that his horse was slain. And he wist well it was Sir Galahad. Then he cried aloud, "Ah, fair knight, abide, and suffer me to do thanks unto thee; for right well have ye done for me." But Sir Galahad rode so fast, that at last he passed out of his sight. When Sir Perceval saw that he would not turn, he said, "Now am I a very wretch, and most unhappy above all other knights." So in this sorrow he abode all that day till it was night; and then he was faint, and laid him down and slept till midnight; and then he awaked, and saw before him a woman, who said unto him, "Sir Perceval, what dost thou here?" He answered, "I do neither good, nor great ill." "If thou wilt promise me," said she, "that thou wilt fulfil my will when I summon thee, I will lend thee my own horse, which shall bear thee whither thou wilt." Sir Perceval was glad of her proffer, and insured her to fulfil all her desire. "Then abide me here, and I will go fetch you a horse." And

so she soon came again, and brought a horse with her that was inky black. When Perceval beheld that horse, he marvelled, it was so great and so well apparelled. And he leapt upon him, and took no heed of himself. And he thrust him with his spurs, and within an hour and less he bare him four days' journey thence, until he came to a rough water, which roared, and his horse would have borne him into it. And when Sir Perceval came nigh the brim, and saw the water so boisterous, he doubted to overpass it. And then he made the sign of the cross on his forehead. When the fiend felt him so charged, he shook off Sir Perceval, and went into the water crying and roaring; and it seemed unto him that the water burned. Then Sir Perceval perceived it was a fiend that would have brought him unto his perdition. Then he commended himself unto God, and prayed our Lord to keep him from all such temptations; and so he prayed all that night till it was day. Then he saw that he was in a wild place, that was closed with the sea nigh all about. And Sir Perceval looked forth over the sea, and saw a ship come sailing towards him; and it came and stood still under the rock. And when Sir Perceval saw this, he hied him thither, and found the ship covered with silk; and therein was a lady of great beauty, and clothed so richly that none might be better.

And when she saw Sir Perceval, she saluted him, and Sir Perceval returned her salutation. Then he asked her of her country and her lineage. And she said, "I am a gentlewoman that am disinherited, and was once the richest woman of the world." "Damsel," said Sir Perceval, "who hath disinherited you? for I have great pity of you." "Sir," said she, "my enemy is a great and powerful lord, and aforetime he made much of me, so that of his favor and of my beauty I had a little pride more than I ought to have had. Also I said a word that pleased him not. So he drove me from his company and from mine heritage. Therefore I know no good knight nor good man but I get him on my side if I may. And, for that I know that thou art a good knight, I beseech thee to help me."

Then Sir Perceval promised her all the help that he might, and she thanked him.

And at that time the weather was hot, and she called to her a gentlewoman, and bade her bring forth a pavilion. And she did

Perceval's Temptation.

so, and pitched it upon the gravel. "Sir," said she, "now may ye rest you in this heat of the day." Then he thanked her, and she put off his helm and his shield, and there he slept a great while. Then he awoke, and asked her if she had any meat, and she said yea, and so there was set upon the table all manner of meats that he could think on.

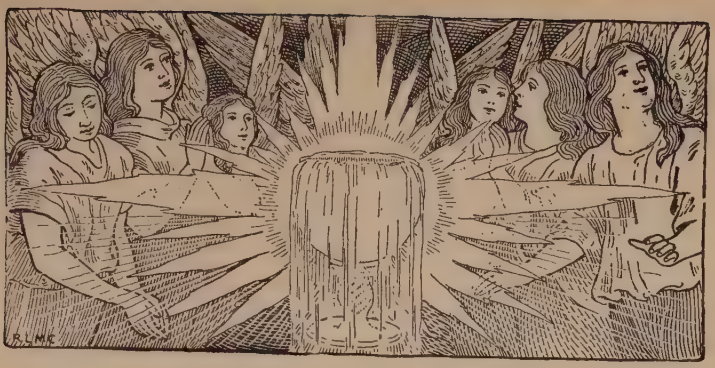
> "And while I tarried, every day she set
> A banquet richer than the day before
> By me. She stole upon my walk,
> And calling me the greatest of the knights,
> Embraced me, and so kissed me the first time.
> Then I remember'd Arthur's warning word,
> That most of us would follow wandering fires,
> And the quest faded in my heart."
>
> —THE HOLY GRAIL.

Also he drank there the strongest wine that ever he drank, and therewith he was a little chafed more than he ought to be. With that he beheld the lady, and he thought she was the fairest creature that ever he saw.

> "Anon,
> The heads of all her people drew to me,
> With supplication both of knees and tongue.
> 'We have heard of thee: thou art our greatest knight:
> Our Lady says it, and we well believe:
> Wed thou our Lady, and rule over us,
> And thou shalt be as Arthur in our land.'"—THE HOLY GRAIL.

And then Sir Perceval proffered her love, and prayed her that she would be his. Then she refused him in a manner, for the cause he should be the more ardent on her, and ever he ceased not to pray her of love. And when she saw him well enchafed, then she said, "Sir Perceval, wit you well I shall not give ye my love unless you swear from henceforth you will be my true servant, and do no thing but that I shall command you. Will you insure me this, as ye be a true knight?" "Yea," said he, "fair lady, by the faith of my body." And as he said this, by adventure and grace, he saw his sword lie on the ground naked, in whose pommel was a red cross, and the sign of the crucifix thereon. Then he made the sign of the cross on his forehead, and therewith the pavilion shrivelled up, and changed

into a smoke and a black cloud. And the damsel cried aloud, and hasted into the ship, and so she went with the wind roaring and yelling that it seemed all the water burned after her. Then Sir Perceval made great sorrow, and called himself a wretch, saying, "How nigh was I lost!" Then he took his arms and departed thence.



CHAPTER XXI.

The San'gre-al (Continued).

Sir Bo'hort—Sir Laun'ce-lot Resumed—Sir Gal'a-had.

Sir Bo'hort.

When Sir Bohort departed from Camelot he met with a religious man riding upon an ass, and Sir Bohort saluted him. "What are ye?" said the good man. "Sir," said Sir Bohort, "I am a knight that fain would be counselled in the quest of the Sangreal." So rode they both together till they came to a hermitage, and there he prayed Sir Bohort to dwell that night with him. So he alighted, and put away his armor, and prayed him that he might be confessed. And they went both into the chapel, and there he was clean confessed. And they ate bread and drank water together. "Now," said the good man, "I pray thee that thou eat none other till thou sit at the table where the Sangreal shall be." "Sir," said Sir Bohort, "but how know ye that I shall sit there?" "Yea," said the good man, "that I know well; but there shall be few of your fellows with you." Then said Sir Bohort, "I agree me thereto." And the good man, when he had heard his confession, found him in so pure a life and so stable that he marvelled thereof.

On the morrow, as soon as the day appeared, Sir Bohort departed thence, and rode into a forest until the hour of midday. And there befell him a marvellous adventure. For he met, at the parting of two ways, two knights that led Sir Lionel, his

brother, all naked, bound upon a strong hackney, and his hands bound before his breast; and each of them held in his hand thorns wherewith they went beating him, so that he was all bloody before and behind; but he said never a word, but, as he was great of heart, he suffered all that they did to him as though he had felt none anguish. Sir Bohort prepared to rescue his brother. But he looked on the other side of him, and saw a knight dragging along a fair gentlewoman, who cried out, "Saint Mary! succor your maid!" And when she saw Sir Bohort she called to him and said, "By the faith that ye owe to knighthood, help me!" When Sir Bohort heard her say thus, he had such sorrow that he wist not what to do. "For if I let my brother be, he must be slain, and that would I not for all the earth; and if I help not the maid, I am shamed for ever." Then lift he up his eyes and said, weeping, "Fair Lord, whose liegeman I am, keep Sir Lionel, my brother, that none of these knights slay him, and for pity of you, and our Lady's sake, I shall succor this maid."

Then he cried out to the knight, "Sir knight, lay your hand off that maid, or else ye be but dead." Then the knight set down the maid, and took his shield, and drew out his sword. And Sir Bohort smote him so hard that it went through his shield and habergeon, on the left shoulder, and he fell down to the earth. Then said Sir Bohort to the maid, "Ye be delivered of this knight this time." "Now," said she, "I pray you lead me there where this knight took me." "I shall gladly do it," said Sir Bohort. So he took the horse of the wounded knight and set the gentlewoman upon it, and brought her there where she desired to be. And there he found twelve knights seeking after her; and when she told them how Sir Bohort had delivered her, they made great joy, and besought him to come to her father, a great lord, and he should be right welcome. "Truly," said Sir Bohort, "that may not be; for I have a great adventure to do." So he commended them to God and departed.

Then Sir Bohort rode after Sir Lionel, his brother, by the trace of their horses. Thus he rode seeking, a great while. Then he overtook a man clothed in a religious clothing, who said, "Sir knight, what seek ye?" "Sir," said Sir Bohort, "I seek my brother, that I saw within a little space beaten of two knights."

"Ah, Sir Bohort, trouble not thyself to seek for him, for truly he is dead." Then he showed him a new-slain body, lying in a thick bush; and it seemed to him that it was the body of Sir Lionel. And then he made such sorrow that he fell to the ground in a swoon, and lay there long. And when he came to himself again, he said, "Fair brother, since the fellowship of you and me is sundered, shall I never have joy again; and now He that I have taken for my master, He be my help!" And when he had said thus, he took up the body in his arms, and put it upon the horse. And then he said to the man, "Canst thou tell me the way to some chapel, where I may bury this body?" "Come on," said the man, "here is one fast by." And so they rode till they saw a fair tower, and beside it a chapel. Then they alighted both, and put the body into a tomb of marble.

Then Sir Bohort commended the good man unto God, and departed. And he rode all that day, and harbored with an old lady. And on the morrow he rode unto a castle in the valley, and there he met with a yeoman. "Tell me," said Sir Bohort, "knowest thou of any adventure?" "Sir," said he, "here shall be, under this castle, a great and marvellous tournament." Then Sir Bohort thought to be there, if he might meet with any of the fellowship that were in quest of the Sangreal; so he turned to a hermitage that was on the border of the forest. And when he was come thither, he found there Sir Lionel his brother, who sat all armed at the entry of the chapel door. And when Sir Bohort saw him, he had great joy, and he alighted off his horse, and said, "Fair brother, when came ye hither?" As soon as Sir Lionel saw him he said, "Ah, Sir Bohort, make ye no false show, for, as for you, I might have been slain, for ye left me in peril of death to go succor a gentlewoman; and for that misdeed I now insure you but death, for ye have right well deserved it." When Sir Bohort perceived his brother's wrath, he kneeled down to the earth and cried him mercy, holding up both his hands, and prayed him to forgive him. "Nay," said Sir Lionel, "thou shalt have but death for it, if I have the upper hand; therefore leap upon thy horse and keep thyself, and if thou do not, I will run upon thee there as thou standest on foot, and so the shame shall be mine, and the harm thine, but

of that I reck not." When Sir Bohort saw that he must fight with his brother or else die, he wist not what to do. Then his heart counselled him not so to do, inasmuch as Sir Lionel was his elder brother, wherefore he ought to bear him reverence. Yet kneeled he down before Sir Lionel's horse's feet, and said, "Fair brother, have mercy upon me and slay me not." But Sir Lionel cared not, for the fiend had brought him in such a will that he should slay him. When he saw that Sir Bohort would not rise to give him battle, he rushed over him, so that he smote him with his horse's feet to the earth, and hurt him sore, that he swooned of distress. When Sir Lionel saw this, he alighted from his horse for to have smitten off his head; and so he took him by the helm, and would have rent it from his head. But it happened that Sir Colgrevance, a knight of the Round Table, came at that time thither, as it was our Lord's will; and then he beheld how Sir Lionel would have slain his brother, and he knew Sir Bohort, whom he loved right well. Then leapt he down from his horse, and took Sir Lionel by the shoulders, and drew him strongly back from Sir Bohort, and said, "Sir Lionel, will ye slay your brother?" "Why," said Sir Lionel, "will ye stay me? If ye interfere in this, I will slay you, and him after." Then he ran upon Sir Bohort, and would have smitten him; but Sir Colgrevance ran between them, and said, "If ye persist to do so any more, we two shall meddle together." Then Sir Lionel defied him, and gave him a great stroke through the helm. Then he drew his sword, for he was a passing good knight, and defended himself quite manfully. So long endured the battle, that Sir Bohort rose up all anguishly, and beheld Sir Colgrevance, the good knight, fight with his brother for his quarrel. Then was he full sorry and heavy, and thought that, if Sir Colgrevance slew him that was his brother, he should never have joy, and if his brother slew Sir Colgrevance, the shame should ever be his.

Then would he have risen for to have parted them, but he had not so much strength to stand on his feet; so he staid so long that Sir Colgrevance had the worse, for Sir Lionel was of great chivalry and right hardy. Then cried Sir Colgrevance, "Ah, Sir Bohort, why come ye not to bring me out of peril of death, wherein I have put me to succor you?" With that, Sir Lionel

smote off his helm, and bore him to the earth. And when he had slain Sir Colgrevance, he ran upon his brother as a fiendly man, and gave him such a stroke that he made him stoop. And he that was full of humility prayed him, "For God's sake, leave this battle, for if it befell, fair brother, that I slew you, or ye me, we should be dead of that sin." "Pray ye not me for mercy," said Sir Lionel. Then Sir Bohort, all weeping, drew his sword, and said, "Now God have mercy upon me, though I defend my life against my brother." With that Sir Bohort lifted up his sword, and would have stricken his brother. Then heard he a voice that said, "Flee, Sir Bohort, and touch him not." Right so alighted a cloud between them, in the likeness of a fire, and a marvellous flame, so that they both fell to the earth, and lay there a great while in a swoon. And when they came to themselves, Sir Bohort saw that his brother had no harm; and he was right glad, for he dread sore that God had taken vengeance upon him. Then Sir Lionel said to his brother, "Brother, forgive me, for God's sake, all that I have trespassed against you." And Sir Bohort answered, "God forgive it thee, and I do."

With that Sir Bohort heard a voice say, "Sir Bohort, take thy way anon, right to the sea, for Sir Perceval abideth thee there." So Sir Bohort departed, and rode the nearest way to the sea. And at last he came to an abbey that was nigh the sea. That night he rested him there, and in his sleep there came a voice unto him and bade him go to the sea-shore. He started up, and made the sign of the cross on his forehead, and armed himself, and made ready his horse and mounted him, and at a broken wall he rode out, and came to the sea-shore. And there he found a ship, covered all with white samite. And he entered into the ship; but it was anon so dark that he might see no man, and he laid him down and slept till it was day. Then he awaked, and saw in the middle of the ship a knight all armed, save his helm. And then he knew it was Sir Perceval de Galis, and each made of other right great joy. Then said Sir Perceval, "We ack nothing now but the good knight Sir Galahad."

> "He ceased; and Arthur turn'd to whom at first
> He saw not, for Sir Bors, on entering, push'd
> Athwart the throng to Launcelot, caught his hand,

Held it, and there, half hidden by him, stood,
Until the king espied him, saying to him,
'Hail, Bors! if ever loyal man and true
Could see it, thou hast seen the Grail,' and Bors,
'Ask me not, for I may not speak of it,
I saw it:' and the tears were in his eyes."—THE HOLY GRAIL.

Sir Laun'ce-lot, Resumed.

It befell upon a night Sir Launcelot arrived before a castle, which was rich and fair. And there was a postern that opened toward the sea, and was open without any keeping, save two lions kept the entry; and the moon shined clear.

"Beheld the enchanted towers of Carbonek.
A castle like a rock upon a rock,
With chasm-like portals open to the sea,
And steps that met the breaker: there was none
Stood near it but a lion on each side,
That kept the entry, and the moon was full.
Then from the boat I leapt, and up the stairs.
There drew my sword. With sudden flaring manes
Those two great beasts rose upright like a man,
Each gript a shoulder, and I stood between,
And, when I would have smitten them, heard a voice,
'Doubt not, go forward; if thou doubt, the beasts
Will tear thee piecemeal.'"—THE HOLY GRAIL.

Anon Sir Launcelot heard a voice that said, "Launcelot, enter into the castle, where thou shalt see a great part of thy desire." Then he made a cross on his forehead, and came to the lions; and they made semblance to do him harm, but he passed them without hurt, and entered into the castle, and he found no gate nor door but it was open. But at the last he found a chamber whereof the door was shut; and he set his hand thereto, to have opened it, but he might not. Then he listened, and heard a voice which sung so sweetly that it seemed none earthly thing; and the voice said,

"Glory and joy and honor to our Lord
And to the Holy Vessel of the Grail."
—THE HOLY GRAIL.

Then Sir Launcelot kneeled down before the chamber, for well he wist that there was the Sangreal in that chamber. Then said he, "Fair, sweet Lord, if ever I did anything that pleased thee, for thy pity show me something of that which I seek." And

Sir Launcelot before the Door.

with that he saw the chamber door open, and there came out a great clearness, that the house was as bright as though all the torches of the world had been there. So he came to the chamber door, and would have entered; and anon a voice said unto him, "Stay, Sir Launcelot, and enter not." And he withdrew him back, and was right heavy in his mind. Then looked he in the midst of the chamber, and saw a table of silver, and the holy vessel, covered with red samite, and many angels about it; whereof one held a candle of wax burning, and another held a cross, and the ornaments of the altar.

> "O, yet methought I saw the Holy Grail,
> All pall'd in crimson samite, and around
> Great angels, awful shapes, and wings and eyes."
> —THE HOLY GRAIL.

Then, for very wonder and thankfulness, Sir Launcelot forgot himself, and he stepped forward and entered the chamber. And suddenly a breath that seemed intermixed with fire smote him so sore in the visage, that therewith he fell to the ground, and had no power to rise.

> "Then in my madness I essay'd the door:
> It gave, and thro' a stormy glare, a heat
> As from a seven-times-heated furnace, I,
> Blasted and burnt, and blinded as I was,
> With such a fierceness that I swoon'd away."
> —THE HOLY GRAIL.

Then felt he many hands about him, which took him up, and bare him out of the chamber, without any amending of his swoon, and left him there, seeming dead to all the people. So on the morrow, when it was fair daylight, and they within were arisen, they found Sir Launcelot before the chamber door. And they looked upon him and felt his pulse, to know if there were any life in him. And they found life in him, but he might neither stand nor stir any member that he had. So they took him and bare him into a chamber, and laid him upon a bed, far from all folk, and there he lay many days. Then the one said he was alive, and others said nay. But said an old man, "He is as full of life as the mightiest of you all, and therefore I counsel you that he be well kept till God bring him back again." And after twenty-four days he opened his eyes; and when he

saw folk, he made great sorrow, and said, "Why have ye wakened me? for I was better at ease than I am now." "What have ye seen?" said they about him. "I have seen," said he, "great marvels that no tongue can tell, and more than any heart can think." Then they said, "Sir, the quest of the Sangreal is achieved right now in you, and never shall ye see more of it than ye have seen." "I thank God," said Sir Launcelot, "of his great mercy, for that I have seen, for it sufficeth me." Then he rose up and clothed himself; and when he was so arrayed, they marvelled all, for they knew it was Sir Launcelot the good knight. And after four days he took his leave of the lord of the castle, and of all the fellowship that were there, and thanked them for their great labor and care of him. Then he departed, and turned to Camelot, where he found King Arthur and Queen Guinevere; but many of the knights of the Round Table were slain and destroyed, more than half. Then all the court was passing glad of Sir Launcelot; and he told the king all his adventures that had befallen him since he departed.

"But what I saw was veil'd
And cover'd; and this quest was not for me."

Sir Gal'a-had.

Now, when Sir Galahad had rescued Perceval from the twenty knights, he rode into a vast forest, wherein he abode many days. Then he took his way to the sea, and it befell him that he was benighted in a hermitage. And the good man was glad when he saw he was a knight-errant. And when they were at rest, there came a gentlewoman knocking at the door; and the good man came to the door to wit what she would. Then she said, "I would speak with the knight which is with you." Then Galahad went to her, and asked her what she would. "Sir Galahad," said she, "I will that ye arm you, and mount upon your horse, and follow me; for I will show you the highest adventure that ever knight saw." Then Sir Galahad armed himself and commended himself to God, and bade the damsel go before, and he would follow where she led.

"A maiden knight—to me is given
Such hope, I know not fear;
I yearn to breathe the airs of heaven
That often meet me here.

I muse on joy that will not cease,
Pure spaces clothed in living beams."—SIR GALAHAD.

So she rode as fast as her palfrey might bear her, till she came to the sea; and there they found the ship where Sir Bohort and Sir Perceval were, who cried from the ship, "Sir Galahad, you are welcome; we have awaited you long." And when he heard them, he asked the damsel who they were. "Sir," said she, "leave your horse here, and I shall leave mine, and we will join ourselves to their company." So they entered into the ship, and the two knights received them both with great joy.

"Sometimes on lonely mountain-meres
I find a magic bark;
I leap on board: no helmsman steers:
I float till all is dark.
A gentle sound, an awful light!
Three angels bear the Holy Grail:
With folded feet, in stoles of white,
On sleeping wings they sail.
Ah, blessed vision! blood of God!
My spirit beats her mortal bars,
As down dark tides the glory slides,
And star-like mingles with the stars."—SIR GALAHAD.

For they knew the damsel, that she was Sir Perceval's sister. Then the wind arose and drove them through the sea all that day and the next, till the ship arrived between two rocks, passing great and marvellous; but there they might not land, for there was a whirlpool; but there was another ship, and upon it they might go without danger. "Go we thither," said the gentlewoman, "and there shall we see adventures, for such is our Lord's will." Then Sir Galahad blessed him, and entered therein, and then next the gentlewoman, and then Sir Bohort and Sir Perceval. And when they came on board, they found there the table of silver, and the Sangreal, which was covered with red samite. And they made great reverence thereto, and Sir Galahad prayed a long time to our Lord, that at what time he should ask to pass out of this world, he should do so; and a voice said to him, "Galahad, thou shalt have thy request; and when thou askest the death of thy body, thou shalt have it, and then shalt thou find the life of thy soul."

And anon the wind drove them across the sea, till they came

to the city of Sarras. Then took they out of the ship the table of silver, and Sir Perceval and Sir Bohort took it before, and Sir Galahad came behind, and right so they went to the city. And at the gate of the city they saw an old man, a cripple.

"And Sir Launfal said, 'I behold in thee
An image of Him who died on the tree.
Thou also hast had thy crown of thorns,
Thou also hast had the world's buffets and scorns;
And to thy life were not denied
The wounds in thy hands and feet and side.
Mild Mary's son, acknowledge me;
Behold, through Him I give to thee!'"

—LOWELL'S HOLY GRAIL.

Then Galahad called him, and bade him help to bear this heavy thing. "Truly," said the old man, "it is ten years since I could not go but with crutches." "Care thou not," said Sir Galahad, "but arise up, and show thy good will." Then the old man rose up, and assayed, and found himself as whole as ever he was; and he ran to the table, and took one part with Sir Galahad.

When they came to the city, it chanced that the king was just dead, and all the city was dismayed, and wist not who might be their king. Right so, as they were in council, there came a voice among them, and bade them choose the youngest knight of those three to be their king. So they made Sir Galahad king, by all the assent of the city. And when he was made king, he commanded to make a chest of gold and of precious stones, to hold the holy vessel. And every day the three companions would come before it, and make their prayers.

Now, at the year's end, and the same day of the year that Sir Galahad received the crown, he got up early, and, with his fellows, came to where the holy vessel was; and they saw one kneeling before it that had about him a great fellowship of angels; and he called Sir Galahad, and said, "Come, thou servant of the Lord, and thou shalt see what thou hast much desired to see." And Sir Galahad's mortal flesh trembled right hard when he began to behold the spiritual things. Then said the good man, "Now wottest thou who I am?" "Nay," said Sir Galahad. "I am Joseph of Arimathea, whom our Lord

hath sent here to thee, to bear thee fellowship." Then Sir Galahad held up his hands toward heaven, and said, "Now, blessed Lord, would I not longer live, if it might please thee." And when he had said these words, Sir Galahad went to Sir Perceval and to Sir Bohort, and kissed them, and commended them to God. And then he kneeled down before the table, and made his prayers, and suddenly his soul departed, and a great multitude of angels bare his soul up to heaven, so as the two fellows could well behold it. Also they saw come from heaven a hand, but they saw not the body; and the hand came right to the vessel and bare it up to heaven.

"At once I saw him far on the great sea,
In silver-shining armor starry-clear;
And o'er his head the holy vessel hung
Clothed in white samite or a luminous cloud.
And o'er his head the holy vessel hung
Redder than any rose, a joy to me,
For now I knew the veil had been withdrawn.
Then in a moment when they blazed again
Opening, I saw the least of little stars
Down on the waste, and straight beyond the star
I saw the spiritual city and all her spires
And gateways in a glory like one pearl,
No larger, tho' the goal of all the saints,
Strike from the sea; and from the star there shot
A rose-red sparkle to the city, and there
Dwelt, and I knew it was the Holy Grail,
Which never eyes on earth again shall see."

—THE HOLY GRAIL.

Since then was there never one so hardy as to say that he had seen the Sangreal on earth any more.

The king listened to the various recitals of his knights, and commended all save Sir Gawain, who had no desire to see.

"But if indeed there came a sign from heaven,
Blessed are Bors, Launcelot, and Perceval,
For these have seen according to their sight.
For every fiery prophet in old times,
And all the sacred madness of the bard,
When God made music thro' them, could but speak
His music by the framework and the chord,
And as ye saw it ye have spoken truth."

—THE HOLY GRAIL.

CHAPTER XXII.

Sir Ag'ri-vain's Treason—Plot of Sir Mod'red.

Sir Ag'ri-vain's Treason.

When Sir Perceval and Sir Bohort saw Sir Galahad dead, they made as much sorrow as ever did two men. And if they had not been good men they might have fallen into despair. As soon as Sir Galahad was buried, Sir Perceval retired to a hermitage out of the city and took a religious clothing, and Sir Bohort was always with him. Thus a year and two months lived Sir Perceval in the hermitage a full holy life, and then passed out of this world, and Sir Bohort buried him by his sister and Sir Galahad. Then Sir Bohort armed himself and departed from Sarras, and entered into a ship, and sailed to the kingdom of Loegria, and in due time arrived safe at Camelot, where the king was. Then was there great joy made of him in the whole court, for they feared he had been dead. Then the king made great clerks to come before him, that they should chronicle of the high adventures of the good knights. And Sir Bohort told him of the adventures that had befallen him and his two fellows, Sir Perceval and Sir Galahad. And Sir Launcelot told the adventures of the Sangreal that he had seen. All this was made in great books, and put up in the church at Salisbury.

So King Arthur and Queen Guinevere made great joy of the remnant that were come home, and chiefly of Sir Launcelot and Sir Bohort. Then Sir Launcelot began to resort unto Queen Guinevere again, and forgot the promise that he made in the quest; so that many in the court spoke of it, and in especial Sir

Modred on the Watch.

Agrivain, Sir Gawain's brother, for he was ever open-mouthed. So it happened Sir Gawain and all his brothers were in King Arthur's chamber, and then Sir Agrivain said thus openly, "I marvel that we all are not ashamed to see and to know so noble a knight as King Arthur so to be shamed by the conduct of Sir Launcelot and the queen." Then spoke Sir Gawain, and said, "Brother, Sir Agrivain, I pray you and charge you move not such matters any more before me, for be ye assured I will not be of your counsel." "Neither will we," said Sir Gaheris and Sir Gareth. "Then will I," said Sir Modred. "I doubt you not," said Sir Gawain, "for to all mischief ever were ye prone; yet I would that ye left all this, for I know what will come of it."

> "Modred's narrow foxy face,
> Heart-hiding smile, and gray persistent eye:
> Henceforward, too, the Powers that tend the soul,
> To help it from the death that cannot die,
> And save it even in extremes, began
> To vex and plague."—GUINEVERE.

"Fall of it what fall may," said Sir Agrivain, "I will disclose it to the king." With that came to them King Arthur. "Now, brothers, hold your peace," said Sir Gawain. "We will not," said Sir Agrivain. Then said Sir Gawain, "I will not hear your tales, nor be of your counsel." "No more will I," said Sir Gareth and Sir Gaheris, and therewith they departed, making great sorrow.

Plot of Sir Mod'red.

Then Sir Agrivain told the king all that was said in the court of the conduct of Sir Launcelot and the queen, and it grieved the king very much. But he would not believe it to be true without proof. So Sir Agrivain laid a plot to entrap Sir Launcelot and the queen, intending to take them together unawares:

> "Thus Modred, still in green, all ear and eye,
> Climbed to the high top of the garden wall
> To spy some secret scandal if he might."—GUINEVERE.

Sir Agrivain and Sir Modred led a party for this purpose, but Sir Launcelot escaped from them, having slain Sir Agrivain and wounded Sir Modred.

The conspiracy against the queen had finally triumphed, and the king could no longer doubt of her guilt. And the law was such in those days that they who committed such crimes, of what estate or condition soever they were, must be burned to death, and so it was ordained for Queen Guinevere. Then said King Arthur to Sir Gawain, "I pray you make you ready, in your best armor, with your brethren, Sir Gaheris and Sir Gareth, to bring my queen to the fire, there to receive her death." "Nay, my most noble lord," said Sir Gawain, "that will I never do; for know thou well my heart will never serve me to see her die, and it shall never be said that I was of your counsel in her death." Then the king commanded Sir Gaheris and Sir Gareth to be there, and they said, "We will be there, as ye command us, sire, but in peaceable wise, and bear no armor upon us."

So the queen was led forth, and her ghostly father was brought to her to shrive her, and there was weeping and wailing of many lords and ladies. Returning to Launcelot at the time of his detection, he fled from the castle and took refuge in the forest. There he gathered a company of friends, and sent spies to the castle that he might know the movements of the king. One brought him word that the queen was being led forth to her death. Then Sir Launcelot and the knights that were with him fell upon the troop that guarded the queen and dispersed them, and slew all who withstood them. And in the confusion Sir Gareth and Sir Gaheris were slain, for they were unarmed and defenceless. And Sir Launcelot carried away the queen to his castle of La Joyeuse Garde.

There his old enemy Sir Modred sought him out:

> "And Modred brought
> His creatures to the basement of the tower
> For testimony; and crying with full voice,
> 'Traitor, come out, ye are trapt at last,' aroused
> Launcelot, who rushing outward lion-like
> Leapt on him, and hurl'd him headlong, and he fell
> Stunn'd, and his creatures took and bare him off
> And all was still: then she, 'The end is come
> And I am shamed forever:' and he said,
> 'Mine be the shame: mine was the sin; but rise,
> And fly to my strong castle over seas;
> There will I hide thee, till my life shall end,
> There hold thee with my life against the world.'"—GUINEVERE.

Then there came one to Sir Gawain and told him how that Sir Launcelot had slain the knights and carried away the queen. "O Lord, defend my brethren!" said Sir Gawain. "Truly," said the man, "Sir Gareth and Sir Gaheris are slain." "Alas!" said Sir Gawain, "now is my joy gone." And then he fell down and swooned, and long he lay there as he had been dead.

When he arose out of his swoon, Sir Gawain ran to the king, crying, "O King Arthur, mine uncle, my brothers are slain." Then the king wept and he both. "My king, my lord, and mine uncle," said Sir Gawain, "bear witness now that I make you a promise that I shall hold by my knighthood, that from this day I will never fail Sir Launcelot until the one of us have slain the other. I will seek Sir Launcelot throughout seven kings' realms, but I shall slay him or he shall slay me." "Ye shall not need to seek him," said the king, "for as I hear, Sir Launcelot will abide me and you in the Joyeuse Garde; and much people draweth unto him, as I hear say." "That may I believe," said Sir Gawain; "but, my lord, summon your friends, and I will summon mine." "It shall be done," said the king. So then the king sent letters and writs throughout all England, both in the length and breadth, to summon all his knights. And unto Arthur drew many knights, dukes and earls, so that he had a great host. Thereof heard Sir Launcelot, and collected all whom he could; and many good knights held with him, both for his sake and for the queen's sake. But King Arthur's host was too great for Sir Launcelot to abide him in the field, and he was full loath to do battle against the king. So Sir Launcelot drew him to his strong castle, with all manner of provisions. Then came King Arthur with Sir Gawain, and laid siege all about La Joyeuse Garde, both the town and the castle; but in no wise would Sir Launcelot ride out of his castle, neither suffer any of his knights to issue out until many weeks were past.

Then it befell upon a day in harvest-time, Sir Launcelot looked over the wall, and spoke aloud to King Arthur and Sir Gawain, "My lords both, all is in vain that ye do at this siege, for here ye shall win no worship, but only dishonor; for if I list to come out, and my good knights, I shall soon make an end of this war." "Come forth," said Arthur, "if thou darest,

and I promise thee I shall meet thee in the midst of the field." "God forbid me," said Sir Launcelot.

"May God forbid
That I should slay the king who made me knight."

"Fie upon thy fair language," said the king, "for know thou well I am thy mortal foe, and ever will be to my dying day." And Sir Gawain said, "What cause hadst thou to slay my brother, Sir Gaheris, who bore no arms against thee, and Sir Gareth, whom thou madest knight, and who loved thee more than all my kin? Therefore know thou well I shall make war to thee all the while that I may live."

When Sir Bohort, and Sir Hector de Marys, and Sir Lionel heard this outcry, they called to them Sir Palamedes, and Sir Saffire his brother, and Sir Lawayn, with many more, and all went to Sir Launcelot. And they said, "My lord, Sir Launcelot, we pray you, if you will have our service, keep us no longer within these walls, for know well all your fair speech and forbearance will not avail you." "Alas!" said Sir Launcelot, "to ride forth and to do battle I am full loath." Then he spake again unto the king and Sir Gawain, and willed them to keep out of the battle; but they despised his words. So then Sir Launcelot's fellowship came out of the castle, in full good array. And always Sir Launcelot charged all his knights, in any wise, to save King Arthur and Sir Gawain.

Then came forth Sir Gawain from the king's host, and offered combat, and Sir Lionel encountered with him, and there Sir Gawain smote Sir Lionel through the body, that he fell to the earth as if dead. Then there began a great conflict, and much people were slain; but ever Sir Launcelot did what he might to save the people on King Arthur's party, and ever King Arthur followed Sir Launcelot to slay him; but Sir Launcelot suffered him, and would not strike again. Then Sir Bohort encountered with King Arthur, and smote him down; and he alighted and drew his sword, and said to Sir Launcelot, "Shall I make an end of this war?" for he meant to have slain King Arthur. "Not so," said Sir Launcelot, "touch him no more, for I will never see that most noble king that made me knight either slain or shamed;" and therewith Sir Launcelot alighted off his horse, and took up the king, and horsed him again, and said thus: "My lord

Arthur, for God's love cease this strife." And King Arthur looked upon Sir Launcelot, and the tears burst from his eyes, thinking on the great courtesy that was in Sir Launcelot more than in any other man; and therewith the king rode his way. Then anon both parties withdrew to repose them, and buried the dead.

But the war continued, and it was noised abroad through all Christendom, and at last it was told afore the pope; and he, considering the great goodness of King Arthur, and of Sir Launcelot, called unto him a noble clerk, which was the Bishop of Rochester, who was then in his dominions, and sent him to King Arthur, charging him that he take his queen, dame Guinevere, unto him again, and make peace with Sir Launcelot.

So, by means of this bishop, peace was made for the space of one year; and King Arthur received back the queen, and Sir Launcelot departed from the kingdom with all his knights, and went to his own country. So they shipped at Cardiff, and sailed unto Benwick, which some men call Bayonne. And all the people of those lands came to Sir Launcelot, and received him home right joyfully. And Sir Launcelot stablished and garnished all his towns and castles, and he greatly advanced all his noble knights, Sir Lionel and Sir Bohort, and Sir Hector de Marys, Sir Blamor, Sir Lawayne, and many others, and made them lords of lands and castles; till he left himself no more than any one of them.

The semblance of the old times were restored for a whole year.

> "Then Arthur made vast banquets, and strange knights
> From the four winds came in: and each one sat,
> Tho' served with choice from air, land, stream and sea,
> Oft in mid-banquet measuring with his eyes
> His neighbor's make and might."—PELLEAS AND ETTARRE.

But when the year was passed, King Arthur and Sir Gawain came with a great host, and landed upon Sir Launcelot's lands, and burnt and wasted all that they might overrun. Then spake Sir Bohort and said, "My lord, Sir Launcelot, give us leave to meet them in the field, and we shall make them rue the time that ever they came to this country." Then said Sir Launcelot, "I am full loath to ride out with my knights for shedding of Christian blood; so we will yet awhile keep our walls, and I

will send a messenger unto my lord Arthur, to propose a treaty; for better is peace than always war." So Sir Launcelot sent forth a damsel, and a dwarf with her, requiring King Arthur to leave his warring upon his lands; and so she started on a palfrey, and the dwarf ran by her side. And when she came to the pavilion of King Arthur, she alighted, and there met her a gentle knight, Sir Lucan the butler, and said, "Fair damsel, come ye from Sir Launcelot du Lac?" "Yea, sir," she said, "I come hither to speak with the king." "Alas!" said Sir Lucan, "My lord Arthur would be reconciled to Sir Launcelot, but Sir Gawain will not suffer him." And with this, Sir Lucan led the damsel to the king, where he sat with Sir Gawain, to hear what she would say. So when she had told her tale, the tears ran out of the king's eyes; and all the lords were forward to advise the king to be accorded with Sir Launcelot, save only Sir Gawain; and he said, "My lord, mine uncle, what will ye do? Will you now turn back, now you are so advanced upon your journey? If ye do, all the world will speak shame of you." "Nay," said King Arthur, "I will do as ye advise me; but do thou give the damsel her answer, for I may not speak to her for pity."

Then said Sir Gawain, "Damsel, say ye to Sir Launcelot, that it is waste labor to sue to mine uncle for peace, and say that I, Sir Gawain, send him word that I promise him, by the faith I owe unto God and to knighthood, I shall never leave him till he have slain me or I him." So the damsel returned; and when Sir Launcelot had heard this answer, the tears ran down his cheeks.

Then it befell on a day Sir Gawain came before the gates, armed at all points, and cried with a loud voice, "Where art thou now, thou false traitor, Sir Launcelot? Why hidest thou thyself within holes and walls, like a coward? Look out now, thou traitor knight, and I will avenge upon thy body the death of my three brethren." All this language heard Sir Launcelot, and the knights which were about him; and they said to him, "Sir Launcelot, now must ye defend you like a knight, or else be shamed for ever, for you have slept overlong and suffered overmuch." Then Sir Launcelot spake on high unto King Arthur, and said, "My lord Arthur, now I have forborne long, and suffered you and Sir Gawain to do what ye would, and now must I needs

defend myself, inasmuch as Sir Gawain hath appealed me of treason." Then Sir Launcelot armed him and mounted upon his horse, and the noble knights came out of the city, and the host without stood all apart; and so the covenant was made that no man should come near the two knights, nor deal with them, till one were dead or yielded.

Then Sir Launcelot and Sir Gawain departed a great way asunder, and then they came together with all their horses' might, and each smote the other in the middle of their shields, but neither of them was unhorsed, but their horses fell to the earth. And then they leapt from their horses, and drew their swords, and gave many sad strokes, so that the blood burst out in many places. Now Sir Gawain had this gift from a holy man, that every day in the year, from morning to noon, his strength was increased threefold, and then it fell again to its natural measure. Sir Launcelot was aware of this, and therefore, during the three hours that Sir Gawain's strength was at the height, Sir Launcelot covered himself with his shield, and kept his might in reserve. And during that time Sir Gawain gave him many sad brunts, that all the knights that looked on marvelled how Sir Launcelot might endure them. Then, when it was past noon, Sir Gawain had only his own might; and when Sir Launcelot felt him so brought down, he stretched himself up, and doubled his strokes, and gave Sir Gawain such a buffet that he fell down on his side; and Sir Launcelot drew back and would strike no more. "Why withdrawest thou, false traitor?" then said Sir Gawain; "now turn again and slay me, for if thou leave me thus, when I am whole again I shall do battle with thee again."

> "'Slay, then,' he shriek'd, 'my will is to be slain.'
> And Launcelot, with his heel upon the fall'n,
> Rolling his eyes, a moment stood, then spake:
> 'Rise, weakling; I am Launcelot.'"
>
> —PELLEAS AND ETTARRE.

And so Sir Launcelot went into the city, and Sir Gawain was borne into King Arthur's pavilion, and his wounds were looked to.

Thus the siege endured, and Sir Gawain lay helpless near a month; and when he was near recovered, came tidings unto King Arthur that made him return with all his host to England.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Morte d'Arthur—The Passing of Guin'e-vere—The Return of Laun'ce-lot—Laun'ce-lot's Death.

Morte d'Arthur.

Sir Modred was left ruler of all England, and he caused letters to be written, as if from beyond sea, that King Arthur was slain in battle. So he called a Parliament, and made himself be crowned king; and he took the queen, Guinevere, and said plainly that he would wed her, but she escaped from him, and took refuge in the Tower of London. And Sir Modred went and laid siege about the Tower of London, and made great assaults thereat, but all might not avail him. Then came word to Sir Modred that King Arthur had raised the siege of Sir Launcelot, and was coming home. Then Sir Modred summoned all the barony of the land; and much people drew unto Sir Modred, and said they would abide with him for better and for worse; and he drew a great host to Dover, for there he heard say that King Arthur would arrive.

> "I hear the steps of Modred in the west,
> And with him many of thy people, and knights
> Once thine, whom thou hast loved, but grosser grown
> Than heathen, spitting at their vows and thee."
>
> —The Passing of Arthur.

And as Sir Modred was at Dover with his host, came King Arthur, with a great number of ships and galleys, and there was Sir Modred awaiting upon the landing. Then was there launching of great boats and small, full of noble men of arms, and

there was much slaughter of gentle knights on both parts. But King Arthur was so courageous, there might no manner of knights prevent him to land, and his knights fiercely followed him; and so they landed, and put Sir Modred aback so that he fled, and all his people. And when the battle was done, King Arthur commanded to bury his people that were dead. And then was noble Sir Gawain found, in a great boat, lying more than half dead. And King Arthur went to him, and made sorrow out of measure. "Mine uncle," said Sir Gawain, "my death-day is come. And had Sir Launcelot been with you as of old, this war had never begun, and of all this I am the cause." Then Sir Gawain prayed the king to send for Sir Launcelot, and to cherish him above all other knights. And so, at the hour of noon, Sir Gawain yielded up his spirit, and then the king bade inter him in a chapel within Dover Castle; and there all men may see the skull of him, and the same wound is seen that Sir Launcelot gave him in battle.

Then was it told the king that Sir Modred had pitched his camp upon Barrendown; and the king rode thither, and there was a great battle betwixt them, and King Arthur's party stood best, and Sir Modred and his party fled unto Canterbury.

And there was a day assigned betwixt King Arthur and Sir Modred that they should meet upon a down beside Salisbury, and not far from the seaside, to do battle yet again. And at night, as the king slept, he dreamed a wonderful dream. It seemed him verily that there came Sir Gawain unto him, with a number of fair ladies with him. And when King Arthur saw him, he said, "Welcome, my sister's son; I weened thou hadst been dead; and now I see thee alive, great is my joy. But, O fair nephew, what be these ladies that hither be come with you?" "Sir," said Sir Gawain, "all these be ladies for whom I have fought when I was a living man; and because I did battle for them in righteous quarrel, they have given me grace to bring me hither unto you, to warn you of your death, if ye fight to-morrow with Sir Modred.

> "Before that last weird battle in the west
> There came on Arthur sleeping, Gawain kill'd
> In Launcelot's war, the ghost of Gawain blown
> Along a wandering wind, and past his ear

Went shrilling, 'Hollow, hollow all delight!
Hail, king! to-morrow thou shalt pass away.
Farewell! there is an isle of rest for thee.
And I am blown along a wandering wind,
And hollow, hollow, hollow all delight.'"
—THE PASSING OF ARTHUR.

Therefore take ye treaty, and proffer you largely for a month's delay; for within a month shall come Sir Launcelot and all his noble knights, and rescue you worshipfully, and slay Sir Modred and all that hold with him." And then Sir Gawain and all the ladies vanished.

"This heard the bold Sir Bedivere, and spake—
'O me, my king, let pass whatever will,
Light was Gawain in life, and light in death
Is Gawain, for the ghost is as the man;
And care not thou for dreams from him, but rise.'"
—THE PASSING OF ARTHUR.

And anon the king called to fetch his noble lords and wise bishops unto him, and when they were come, the king told them his vision, and what Sir Gawain had told him. Then the king sent Sir Lucan the butler, and Sir Bedivere, with two bishops, and charged them in any wise to take a treaty for a month and a day with Sir Modred. So they departed, and came to Sir Modred; and so, at the last, Sir Modred was agreed to have Cornwall and Kent, during Arthur's life, and all England after his death.

"Sir Modred; he the nearest to the king,
His nephew, ever like a subtle beast
Lay couchant with his eyes upon the throne,
Ready to spring, waiting a chance."—GUINEVERE.

Then was it agreed that King Arthur and Sir Modred should meet betwixt both their hosts, and each of them should bring fourteen persons, and then and there they should sign the treaty. And when King Arthur and his knights were prepared to go forth, he warned all his host, "If so be ye see any sword drawn, look ye come on fiercely, and slay whomsoever withstandeth, for I in no wise trust that traitor, Sir Modred." In like wise Sir Modred warned his host. So they met, and were agreed and accorded thoroughly. And wine was brought, and they drank.

Right then came an adder out of a little heath-bush, and stung a knight on the foot. And when the knight felt him sting, he looked down and saw the adder, and then he drew his sword to slay the adder, and thought of no other harm. And when the host on both sides saw that sword drawn, they blew trumpets and horns, and shouted greatly. And King Arthur took his horse, and rode to his party, saying, "Alas, this unhappy day!" And Sir Modred did in like wise. And never was there a more doleful battle in Christian land. And ever King Arthur rode throughout the battle, and did full nobly, as a worthy king should, and Sir Modred that day did his devoir and put himself in great peril.

"Nor ever yet had Arthur fought a fight
Like this last, dim, weird battle of the west.
A death-white mist swept over sand and sea;
Whereof the chill, to him who breathed it, drew
Down his blood, till all his heart was cold
With formless fear, and ev'n on Arthur fell
Confusion, since he saw not whom he fought,
For friend and foe were shadows in the mist,
And friend slew friend, not knowing whom he slew;
And some had visions out of golden youth,
And some beheld the faces of old ghosts
Look in upon the battle; then
Rose, and the pale king glanced across the field
Of battle; but no man was moving there;
Nor any cry of Christian heard thereon,
Nor yet of heathen; only the wan wave
Brake in among dead faces, to and fro
Swaying the helpless hands, and up and down
Tumbling the hollow helmets of the fallen."

—THE PASSING OF ARTHUR.

And thus they fought all the long day, till the most of all the noble knights lay dead upon the ground. Then the king looked about him and saw of all his host were left alive but two knights, Sir Lucan the butler and Sir Bedivere his brother, and they were full sore wounded.

"Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:
'The sequel of to-day unsolders all
The goodliest fellowship of famous knights
Whereof this world holds record. Such a sleep

They sleep—the men I loved. I think that we
Shall never more, at any future time,
Delight our souls with talk of knightly deeds,
Walking about the gardens and the halls
Of Camelot, as in the days that were.' "
—THE PASSING OF ARTHUR.

After the Last Battle.

Then King Arthur saw where Sir Modred leaned upon his sword among a great heap of dead men. "Now give me my spear," said Arthur unto Sir Lucan, "for yonder I espy the traitor that hath wrought all this woe." "Sir, let him be," said Sir Lucan; "for if ye pass this unhappy day, ye shall be right well revenged upon him. Remember what the sprite of Sir Gawain told you, and leave off now, for ye have won the field; and if ye leave off now, this evil day of destiny is past." "Betide me life, betide me death," said King Arthur, "he

shall not now escape my hands." Then the king took his spear in both hands, and ran toward Sir Modred, crying, "Traitor, now is thy death-day come."

> "And uttering this, the king
> Made at the man: then Modred smote his liege
> Hard on that helm which many a heathen sword
> Had beaten thin, while Arthur at one blow,
> Striking the last stroke with Excalibur,
> Slew him, and all but slain himself he fell."
>
> —THE PASSING OF ARTHUR.

Sir Lucan the butler and Sir Bedivere, seeing him fall, hastened to his aid. They raised him up, and gently led him betwixt them both to a little chapel not far from the seaside.

> "The bold Sir Bedivere uplifted him,
> And bore him to a chapel nigh the field,
> A broken chancel with a broken cross,
> That stood on a dark strait of barren land.
> On one side lay the ocean, and on one
> Lay a great water, and the moon was full."
>
> —MORTE D'ARTHUR.

And when the king was there, he thought him well eased. Then heard they people cry in the field. And Sir Lucan went to see what that cry betokened; and he saw by the moonlight that pillers and robbers were come to rob the dead. And he returned, and said to the king, "By my rede, it is best that we bring you to some town." "I would it were so," said the king. And when the king tried to go, he fainted. Then Sir Lucan took up the king on the one part, and Sir Bedivere on the other part; and in the lifting, Sir Lucan fell in a swoon to the earth, for he was grievously wounded. And then the noble knight's heart burst. And when the king awoke, he beheld Sir Lucan how he lay speechless. "Alas!" said the king, "this is to me a full heavy sight, to see this noble duke so die for my sake." Then Sir Bedivere wept for his brother. "Leave this mourning and weeping," said the king, "for wit thou well, if I might live myself, the death of Sir Lucan would grieve me evermore."

> "But let what will be, be.
> I am so deeply smitten thro' the helm

That without help I cannot last till morn.
Thou therefore take my brand Excalibur,
Which was my pride: for thou rememberest how
In those old days, one summer noon, an arm
Rose up from out the bosom of the lake,
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
Holding the sword—and how I row'd across
And took it, and have worn it, like a king:
And, wheresoever I am sung or told
In after time, this shall be known.
But now delay not. Take thou Excalibur,
And fling him far into the middle mere,
Watch what thou seest, and lightly bring me word."

—MORTE D'ARTHUR.

"My lord," said Sir Bedivere, "your commandment shall be done." So Sir Bedivere departed, and by the way he beheld that noble sword, that the pommel and the heft were all of precious stones; and then he said to himself, "If I throw this rich sword into the water, no good shall come thereof, but only harm and loss." And then Sir Bedivere hid Excalibur under a tree. And so, as soon as he might, he came again unto the king. "What sawest thou there?" said the king. "Sir," he said, "I saw nothing." "Alas! thou hast deceived me," said the king. "Go thou lightly again, and as thou love me, spare not to throw it in." Then Sir Bedivere went again, and took the sword in his hand to throw it; but again it beseemed him but sin and shame to throw away that noble sword, and he hid it away again, and returned, and told the king he had done his commandment. "What sawest thou there?" said the king.

"Then answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:
'I heard the ripple washing in the reeds,
And the wild water lapping on the crag.'"

—MORTE D'ARTHUR.

"Ah, traitor untrue!" said King Arthur, "now hast thou betrayed me twice. And yet thou art named a noble knight, and hast been lief and dear to me. But now go again, and do as I bid thee, for thy long tarrying putteth me in jeopardy of my life."

"Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere, and ran,
And leaping down the ridges lightly, plunged

Among the bulrush-beds, and clutch'd the sword,
And strongly wheel'd and threw it. The great brand
Made lightnings in the splendor of the moon,
And flashing round and round, and whirl'd in an arch,
Shot like a streamer of the northern morn,
Seen where the moving isles of winter shock
By night, with noises of the northern sea.
So flash'd and fell the brand Excalibur:
But ere he dipt the surface, rose an arm
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
And caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him
Three times, and drew him under in the mere."

—MORTE D'ARTHUR.

Sir Bedivere came again to the king, and told him what he saw. "Help me hence," said the king, "for I fear I have tarried too long." Then Sir Bedivere took the king on his back, and so went with him to that water-side; and when they came there, even fast by the bank there rode a little barge with many fair ladies in it, and among them was a queen; and all had black hoods, and they wept and shrieked when they saw King Arthur.

"Then murmur'd Arthur, 'Place me in the barge,'
And to the barge they came. There those three queens
Put forth their hands, and took the king, and wept.
But she, that rose the tallest of them all
And fairest, laid his head upon her lap,
And loosed the shatter'd casque, and chafed his hands,
And call'd him by his name, complaining loud,
And dropping bitter tears against his brow
Striped with dark blood: for all his face was white
And colorless, and like the wither'd moon
Smote by the fresh beam of the springing east."

—MORTE D'ARTHUR.

And then they rowed from the land, and Sir Bedivere beheld them go from him. Then he cried: "Ah, my lord Arthur, will ye leave me here alone among mine enemies?" "Comfort thyself," said the king, "for in me is no further help."

"The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
And God fulfils himself in many ways,
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.
Comfort thyself: what comfort is in me?
I have lived my life, and that which I have done

May he within himself make pure! but thou,
If thou shouldst never see my face again,
Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore let thy voice
Rise like a fountain for me night and day.
For what are men better than sheep or goats
That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
Both for themselves and those who call them friend?
For so the whole round earth is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.
But now farewell. I am going a long way
With these thou seëst—if indeed I go—
(For all my mind is clouded with a doubt)
To the island-valley of Avilion;
Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,
Nor ever wind blows loudly; but it lies
Deep-meadow'd, happy, fair with orchard-lawns
And bowery hollows crown'd with summer sea,
Where I will heal me of my grievous wound.'
So said he, and the barge with oar and sail
Moved from the brink, like some full-breasted swan
That, fluting a wild carol ere her death,
Ruffles her pure cold plume, and takes the flood
With swarthy webs."—MORTE D'ARTHUR.

Sir Bedivere stood for a long time revolving in his memories:

"Till the hull
Look'd one black dot against the verge of dawn,
And on the mere the wailing died away."

In the morning he was aware of a chapel and a hermitage near. Thither he went, and there met a hermit. "Sir," said Sir Bedivere, "what man is there buried that ye pray so near unto?" "Fair son," said the hermit, "I know not verily. But this night there came a number of ladies, and brought hither one dead, and prayed me to bury him." "Alas!" said Sir Bedivere, "that was my lord, King Arthur." Then Sir Bedivere swooned, and when he awoke he prayed the hermit he might abide with him, to live with fasting and prayers. "Ye are welcome," said the hermit. So there bode Sir Bedivere with the hermit; and he put on poor clothes, and served the hermit full lowly in fasting and in prayers.

Thus of Arthur I find never more written in books that be

The Funeral Barge.

authorized, nor more of the very certainty of his death; but thus was he led away in a ship, wherein were three queens; the one was King Arthur's sister, Queen Morgane le Fay; the other was Vivian, the Lady of the Lake; and the third was the Queen of North Galis. And this tale Sir Bedivere, knight of the Table Round, made to be written.

Yet some men say that King Arthur is not dead, but hid away into another place, and men say that he shall come again and reign over England. But many say that there is written on his tomb this verse:

"Here Arthur lies, King once and King to be."

The Passing of Guin'e-vere.

When Guinevere saw the disaster that threatened Sir Arthur and the kingdom, she mounted a horse and fled to Almesbury. There she sought refuge in a nunnery.

"And when she came to Almesbury she spake
There to the nuns, and said, 'Mine enemies
Pursue me, but, O peaceful Sisterhood,
Receive, and yield me sanctuary, nor ask
Her name to whom ye yield it, till her time
To tell you:' and her beauty, grace and power
Wrought as a charm upon them, and they spared
To ask it."—GUINEVERE.

There she remained for many weeks unknown to her attendants. Her time was spent in the bitterest reflections. She wandered alone through the halls of the nunnery, a constant object to the curious and the wondering. Sometimes she would venture out upon the grounds and watch the passing crowds:

"She, staring on the stone-dry street,
Through the long summer-noonday heat,
And stirring never from her seat,
Half saw men's shadows pass her feet.
'Ah, me,' she murmured, 'well I see
How bitter each day's life may be
To them who have not where to flee,
And are as one with misery.'"—S. WEIR MITCHELL.

A little maid, a novice, was her only companion. At times she

found relief in talking to her guileless friend, and listening to the songs which the nuns had taught her to sing:

"'Late, late, so late! and dark the night and chill!
Late, late, so late! but we can enter still.
Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now.

"'No light had we: for that we do repent;
And learning this, the bridegroom will relent.
Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now.

"'No light: so late! and dark and chill the night!
O let us in, that we may find the light!
Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now.

"'Have we not heard the bridegroom is so sweet?
O let us in, tho' late, to kiss his feet!
No, no, too late! ye cannot enter now.'"—GUINEVERE.

The sight of the queen suffering always moved the little novice to compassion, and in her own guileless way she sought to express her sympathy. In this she would speak of a sorrow greater than her own:

"Ah, sweet lady, the king's grief
For his own self, and his own queen, and realm,
Must needs be thrice as great as any of ours.
For even here they talk at Almesbury
About the good king and his wicked queen,
And were I such a king with such a queen,
Well might I wish to veil her wickedness,
But were I such a king, it could not be."

To which a mournful answer made the queen:

"O, closed about by narrowing nunnery walls,
What knowest thou of the world, and all its lights
And shadows, all the wealth and all the woe?
If ever Launcelot, that most noble knight,
Were for one hour less noble than himself,
Pray for him that he 'scape the doom of fire,
And weep for her who drew him to his doom."—GUINEVERE.

One night, as the queen sat musing in her chamber, an armed warrior approached the nunnery door. A subdued whisper ran through the hall, and then a cry, "The King!" It was Sir Arthur. The queen—

"From off the seat she fell, ...
And grovelled with her face against the floor.
Then came silence, then a voice,
Monotonous and hollow, like a ghost's,
Denouncing judgment; but, tho' changed, the king's.
'Liest thou here so low, the child of one
I honor'd, happy, dead before thy shame?
Well is it that no child is born of thee.
The children born of thee are sword and fire,
Red ruin, and the breaking up of laws,
The craft of kindred and the Godless hosts
Of heathen swarming o'er the Northern Sea.'
He paused, and in the pause she crept an inch
Nearer, and laid her hands about his feet.
Far off a solitary trumpet blew.
Then waiting by the doors the warhorse neigh'd,
As at a friend's voice, and he spake again.
'Yet think not that I come to urge thy crimes,
I did not come to curse thee, Guinevere,
I, whose vast pity almost makes me die
To see thee, laying there thy golden head,
My pride in happier summers at my feet.
And all is past, the sin is sinn'd, and I,
Lo: I forgive thee, as Eternal God
Forgives: do thou for thine own soul the rest.
But how to take last leave of all I loved?
O golden hair, with which I used to play
Not knowing. O imperial-moulded form,
And beauty such as never woman wore,
Let no man dream but that I love thee still
Perchance, and so thou purify thy soul,
And so thou lean on our fair father Christ,
Hereafter in that world where all are pure
We two may meet before high God, and thou
Wilt spring to me, and claim me thine.
Now must I hence.
Thro' the thick night I hear the trumpet blow:
They summon me, their King, to lead mine hosts
Far down to that great battle in the west."—GUINEVERE.

The identity of the queen was no longer a mystery. King Arthur's visit had revealed to the astonished nuns that Guinevere had become one of themselves. The queen was apprehensive lest the disclosure might invite their reproach. She followed with her eyes from the window the form of the king as he disappeared in the darkness, then turning to the nuns, exclaimed.

"O shut me round with narrowing nunnery-walls,
Meek maidens, from the voices crying 'Shame.'"

Peace.

"They took her to themselves,
Still hoping, fearing, 'Is it yet too late?'
Dwelt with them, till in time their Abbess died.
Then she, for her good deeds and her pure life,
And for the power of ministration in her,
And likewise for the high rank she had borne,
Was chosen abbess, there, an abbess, lived
For three brief years, and there, an abbess, past
To where beyond these voices there is peace."—GUINEVERE.

There was much sorrow throughout the country at the death of Queen Guinevere. With her passing, and that of the king's, the people saw that the age of chivalry was soon to be over. She was borne with great pomp to Glastonbury, and there buried amid the dole and lamentations of the kingdom.

The Return of Laun'ce-lot.

When Sir Launcelot heard in his country that Sir Modred was crowned king of England, and made war against his own uncle, King Arthur, then was Sir Launcelot wroth out of measure, and said to his kinsmen: "Alas that double traitor, Sir Modred; now it repenteth me that ever he escaped out of my hands." Then Sir Launcelot and his fellows made ready in all haste, with ships and galleys, to pass into England; and so he passed over till he came to Dover, and there he landed with a great army. Then Sir Launce.ot was told that King Arthur was slain.

> "Alas! What sadder news
> Could come to me?"

Then he called the kings, dukes, barons, and knights, and said thus: "My fair lords, I thank you all for coming into this country with me, but we came too late, and that shall repent me while I live. But since it is so," said Sir Launcelot, "I will myself ride and seek my lady, Queen Guinevere, for I have heard say she hath fled into the west; therefore ye shall abide me here fifteen days, and if I come not within that time, then take your ships and your host, and depart into your country."

So Sir Launcelot departed and rode westerly, and there he sought many days; and at last he came to a nunnery, and was seen of Queen Guinevere as he walked in the cloister; and when she saw him, she swooned away. And when she might speak, she bade him to be called to her. And when Sir Launcelot was brought to her, she said:

> "O Launcelot, get thee hence to thine own land,
> For if thou tarry we shall meet again.
> Would God, that thou could'st hide me from myself,
> For I will draw me into sanctuary,
> And bide my doom."

And so they parted, with tears and much lamentation; and the ladies bare the queen to her chamber, and Sir Launcelot took his horse and rode away, weeping.

And at last Sir Launcelot was ware of a hermitage and a chapel, and then he heard a little bell ring to mass; and thither he rode and alighted, and tied his horse to the gate, and heard

mass. And he that sang the mass was the hermit with whom Sir Bedivere had taken up his abode; and Sir Bedivere knew Sir Launcelot, and they spake together after mass. But when Sir Bedivere had told his tale, Sir Launcelot's heart almost burst for sorrow. Then he kneeled down, and prayed the hermit to shrive him, and besought that he might be his brother. Then the hermit said, "I will gladly;" and then he put a habit upon Sir Launcelot, and there he served God day and night, with prayers and fastings.

And the great host abode at Dover till the end of the fifteen days set by Sir Launcelot, and then Sir Bohort made them to go home again to their own country; and Sir Bohort, Sir Hector de Marys, Sir Blamor, and many others, took on them to ride through all England to seek Sir Launcelot. So Sir Bohort by fortune rode until he came to the same chapel where Sir Launcelot was; and when he saw Sir Launcelot in that manner of clothing, he prayed the hermit that he might be in that same. And so there was an habit put upon him, and there he lived in prayers and fasting. And within half a year came others of the knights, their fellows, and took such a habit as Sir Launcelot and Sir Bohort had. Thus they endured in great penance six years.

And upon a night there came a vision to Sir Launcelot, and charged him to haste him toward Almesbury, and "by the time thou come there, thou shalt find Queen Guinevere dead." Then Sir Launcelot rose up early, and told the hermit thereof. Then said the hermit, "It were well that ye disobey not this vision." And Sir Launcelot took his seven companions with him, and on foot they went from Glastonbury to Almesbury, which is more than thirty miles. And when they were come to Almesbury, they found that Queen Guinevere died but half an hour before. Then Sir Launcelot saw her visage, but he wept not greatly, but sighed. And so he did all the observance of the service himself, both the "dirige" at night, and at morn he sang mass. And there was prepared an horse-bier, and Sir Launcelot and his fellows followed the bier on foot from Almesbury until they came to Glastonbury; and she was wrapped in cered clothes, and laid in a coffin of marble. And when she was put in the earth, Sir Launcelot swooned, and lay long as one dead.

And Sir Launcelot never after ate but little meat, nor drank; but continually mourned.

Laun'ce-lot's Death.

And within six weeks Sir Launcelot fell sick; and he sent for the hermit and all his true fellows, and said, "Sir hermit, I pray you give me all my rights that a Christian man ought to have." "It shall not need," said the hermit and all his fellows; "it is but heaviness of your blood, and to-morrow morn you shall be well." "My fair lords," said Sir Launcelot, "my careful body will into the earth; I have warning more than now I will say; therefore give me my rights." So when he was houseled and aneled, and had all that a Christian man ought to have, he prayed the hermit that his fellows might bear his body to Joyous Garde. "It repenteth me sore," said Sir Launcelot, "but I made a vow aforetime that in Joyous Garde I would be buried." Then there was weeping and wringing of hands among his fellows. And that night Sir Launcelot died; and when Sir Bohort and his fellows came to his bedside the next morning, they found him stark dead; and he lay as if he had smiled, and the sweetest savor all about him that ever they knew.

And they put Sir Launcelot into the same horse-bier that Queen Guinevere was laid in, and the hermit and they all together went with the body till they came to Joyous Garde. And there they laid his corpse in the body of the quire, and sang and read many psalms and prayers over him. And ever his visage was laid open and naked, that all folks might behold him. And right thus, as they were at their service, there came Sir Hector de Maris, that had seven years sought Sir Launcelot his brother, through all England, Scotland, and Wales. And when Sir Hector heard such sounds in the chapel of Joyous Garde, he alighted and came into the quire. And all they knew Sir Hector. Then went Sir Bohort, and told him how there lay Sir Launcelot his brother dead. Then Sir Hector threw his shield, his sword, and helm from him. And when he beheld Sir Launcelot's visage, it were hard for any tongue to tell the doleful complaints he made for his brother. "Ah, Sir Launcelot!" he said, "there thou liest. And now I dare to say thou wert never matched of none earthly

knight's hand. And thou wert the courteousest knight that ever bare shield; and thou wert the truest friend to thy lover that ever bestrode horse; and thou wert the truest lover, of a sinful man, that ever loved woman; and thou wert the kindest man that ever struck with sword. And thou wert the goodliest person that ever came among press of knights. And thou wert the meekest man, and the gentlest, that ever ate in hall among ladies. And thou wert the sternest knight to thy mortal foe that ever put spear in the rest." Then there was weeping and dolor out of measure. Thus they kept Sir Launcelot's corpse fifteen days, and then they buried it with great devotion.

Then they went back with the hermit to his hermitage. And Sir Bedivere was there ever still hermit to his life's end. And Sir Bohort, Sir Hector, Sir Blamor, and Sir Bleoberis went into the Holy Land. And these four knights did many battles upon the miscreants, the Turks; and there they died upon a Good Friday, as it pleased God.[1]

> "Sir Launcelot, as became a noble knight,
> Was gracious to all ladies, and the same
> In open battle or the tilting-field,
> Forbore his own advantage, and the king,
> In open battle or the tilting-field,
> Forbore his own advantage, and these two
> Were the most nobly-mannered men of all.
> For manners are not idle, but the fruit
> Of loyal nature and of noble mind."—GUINEVERE.

Thus endeth this noble and joyous book, entitled La Morte d'Arthur; notwithstanding it treateth of the birth, life, and acts of the said King Arthur, and of his noble Knights of the Round Table, their marvellous enquests and adventures, the achieving of the Sangreal, and, in the end, le Morte d'Arthur, with the dolorous death and departing out of this world of them all. Which book was reduced into English by Sir Thomas Mallory, Knight, and divided into twenty-one books, chaptered and imprinted and finished in the Abbey Westmestre, the last day of July, the year of our Lord MCCCCLXXXV.

[1] This was centuries before the Turks had occupied Palestine, an inaccuracy quite pardonable in traditional history.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Mediæval Legends.

St. George and the Dragon—The Lia Fail—Robin Hood—Stone'henge—The Fortunate Isles.

St. George and the Dragon.

THERE are two St. Georges who figure in British annals, one of whom was a veritable person who suffered martyrdom in Nicomedia in the fourth century. The other St. George is a mythical hero, and is represented as having slain the dragon which a magician had sent to the Princess Alexandria. The dragon is frequently referred to in Scripture, and is supposed by some to have been the crocodile or a giant serpent. In mythology he is always pictured as of immense size, with wings, crest, and a snaky tail. The one slain by St. George is thus represented in a poem of great antiquity:

> "His scales was bryghter than the glas
> And harder were they than any bras;
> Betwene his shulder and his tayle
> Was forty fote withoute fayle."—PERCY'S RELIQUES.

The monster had a voice like that of thunder. St. George smote him with his spear, which was broken into a thousand pieces. A stroke, in return, from the monster's tail threw rider and horse to the earth and broke two of the saint's ribs. The battle would have gone hard with St. George had he not fortunately

> "Hitt him under the wynge
> As he was in his flyenge."—PERCY'S RELIQUES.

The story appears under various forms. One represents the dragon as a plague infesting the city.

"A dreadful dragon fierce and fell,
Who by his poisonous breath each day
Did many of the city slay."—PERCY'S RELIQUES.

Daily he came to the city, and claimed as his victim some beautiful maiden.

"Thus did the dragon ev'ry day
Untimely crop some virgin flower,
Till all the maids were worn away,
And none were left him to devour."
—PERCY'S RELIQUES.

At last the people went to the king, and urged that his daughter must be given as a sacrifice to the monster. The queen protested, and offered herself in the princess's stead.

"Like mad men all the people cried,
'Thy death to us can do no good;
Our safety only doth abide
In making her the dragon's food.'"
—PERCY'S RELIQUES.

The young woman finally yielded, and said to her father that she was ready to offer herself as a sacrifice. Great preparations were made for her death. She was tied to the stake, and awaited the dragon's coming. The king and queen departed, and left their daughter to her fate. By accident St. George came riding by, and asked what caitiff thus abused the maiden. Just then the dragon issued from the wood. But her deliverer was at hand; the monster had at last met the bravest knight in all the world.

"St. George, then looking round about,
The fiery dragon soon espeyed,
And, like a knight of courage stout,
Against him did most fiercely ride.
And with such blows he did him greet,
He fell beneath the horse's feet.
And thus within the lady's view,
The mighty dragon straight he slew."
—PERCY'S RELIQUES.

The Lia Fail and Coronation Chair.

There is another and more beautiful version to this same legend. St. George, while out in search of an adventure, came upon the princess, bound and awaiting her death. Asking her the cause of her grief, she urged him "to go his way, lest he perish also." St. George saw the monster coming

> "Lifelike the huge neck seemed to swell,
> And widely as some porch to hell
> You might the horrent jaws survey,
> Grisly and greeding for their prey.
> Grim fangs an added terror gave,
> Like crags that whiten through a cave."—SCHILLER.

He hastily crossed himself, and struck him such a blow that he fell to the earth. Then the knight ordered the lady to take his girdle and bind it about the dragon's neck. This she did, when the monster followed her as if he had been a lamb. She led him into the city, which, when the people saw, they fled in terror. St. George assured them there was no danger, and promised, if they would but embrace Christianity, he would slay the dragon before their eyes. Fifteen thousand at once consented. The dragon was slain, and the reign of terror was over. The king at once erected a church dedicated to the Virgin and St. George. A fountain of water is said to have sprung up nearby, in whose waters the sick were healed.

The legend of St. George and the dragon is of the most ancient date. It is of Oriental origin, and probably was suggested by the apparent struggle between Light and Darkness. The similarity between this legend and that of Perseus and Andromeda is too marked to escape notice.[1]

The Lia Fail.

The historic stone known in Scotland as the "Stone of Destiny," in Ireland as the "Lia Fail," in England as "Jacob's Pillar," and more generally as the "Scone," is claimed by Irish tradition to have been brought to Ireland by an Egyptian princess, who placed it in Tara's Hall six hundred years before our era. Within the hall of Tara once met the kings and nobles of Ireland.

[1] Age of Fable, p. 145.

"The harp that once through Tara's halls
The soul of music shed,
Now hangs as mute on Tara's walls
As if that soul had fled.
So sleeps the pride of former days,
So glory's thrill is o'er,
And hearts that once beat high for praise,
Now feel that pulse no more."—MOORE.

The fate of nations seems to have followed the wanderings of this historic stone. Tradition says that Jacob rested his head upon it the night of his vision. It became a part of the furniture of the temple, and was carried during the captivity by Jeremiah to Egypt, and by a princess, as we have said, to Ireland. It was removed to Iona in the sixth century, that Fergus, the first king of the Scots, might be crowned upon it. St. Columba requested, when dying, that it might be placed beneath his head. From Iona it was removed to Scotland, where all the Scottish kings were crowned upon it for four hundred and fifty years. The English removed it in the thirteenth century to London, where for over five hundred years it has seen service at every coronation. There has long been a tradition that

"Wherever is found this sacred stone
The Scottish race shall reign."

Queen Victoria is a direct descendant of James VI. of Scotland, the last of the Scottish kings. The stone is at present fastened under the coronation chair in Westminster Abbey.

Robin Hood.

Robin Hood is said to have been a noted outlaw who lived at the beginning of the thirteenth century. There is so much of the legend, however, associated with his life, that many doubt his personality altogether. He was to England what Rob Roy became to Scotland three centuries later. The historians ascribe to him the title of the Earl of Huntingdon, which is probably, like much else, purely fictitious. He drew about him one hundred of the most skilled archers in England, and made war upon the king and law. But his robberies were confined solely to the rich; the poor he never molested, and the weak found in him the bravest defender.

"Robyn was a proude outlawe,
Whyles he walked on grounde,
So curteyse an outlawe as he was one
Was never none yfounde."—PERCY'S RELIQUES.

His associates were three, Little John, Friar Tuck, and Marian. There was a strange combination of religion and honor associated with his depredations and crimes. Friar Tuck heard his daily confessions, Little John was his boldest robber, while Marian lives in the old ballads as a woman of great beauty.

"A bonny fine maid of a noble degree,
Maid Marian called by name,
Did live in the North, of excellent worth,
For she was a gallant dame.
For favour and face and beauty most rare,
Queen Hellen shee did excell,
For Marian then was praised of all men,
That did in the country dwell."—OLD BALLAD.

The outlaw's death was as romantic as his life. One day, when feeling ill, he said to Little John :

"But I am not able to shoot one shot more,
My arrows will not flee,
But I have a cousin lives down below,
Please God she will bleed me."—PERCY'S RELIQUES.

Robin Hood repaired to Kirkley-hall that he might be bled by his cousin, a nun. His cousin, for some reason, had determined upon his death.

"She took him by the lily-white hand,
And let him to a private room,
And then she blooded bold Robin Hood
Whilst one drop of blood would run.

"She blooded him in the vein of the arm,
And locked him up in the room,
There did he bleed all the live-long day
Until the next day at noon."—PERCY'S RELIQUES.

The robber, suspecting his death was intended, blew three blasts upon his horn from the window. Little John heard him from the outside, and recognizing the faintness of the call, hast-

ened to the nunnery. There he found his master dying. He at once proposed that they burn the nunnery and Kirkley-hall.

> "'Now nay, now nay,' quoth Robin Hood,
> 'That boon I'll not grant thee;
> I never hurt woman in all my life,
> Nor man in woman's company.'"—PERCY'S RELIQUES.

He asked that he might be carried to the window and permitted to shoot a final arrow before he died.

> "But give me my bent bow in my hand,
> And a broad arrow I'll let flee,
> And where this arrow is taken up,
> There shall my grave digged be."—PERCY'S RELIQUES.

Little John bore his chief to the window, and a random arrow marked his grave. There they buried Robin Hood.

> "Here underneath this little stone,
> Thro' Death's assaults now lieth one
> Known by the name of Robin Hood,
> Who was a thief and archer good.
> Full thirty years and something more
> He robbed the rich to feed the poor,
> Therefore his grave bedew with tears,
> And offer for his soul your prayers."
> —PERCY'S RELIQUES.

Robin Hood and King Arthur have much in common. Each was a knight after his own order; but Arthur was the ideal of the upper classes, while Robin Hood held the same position among the lower. Whether personalities or creations, their effect upon English literature is beyond estimate.

Stone'henge.

Stonehenge, a name signifying "hanging stones," is a collection of massive stones on Salisbury Plain in England. These stones are about one hundred and forty in number, and varying from ten to seventy tons in weight. They are placed in the form of two ovals within two circles. What they mean or how they came to be in their present position has never been satisfactorily settled.

Tradition says that they were transported by Merlin from Ire-

land to form a monument to Pendragon, the brother of Uther, and his predecessor on the throne. Many antiquarians, however, believe Stonehenge to have been a Druidic temple. If so, it is older by far than any British history. Near the centre of the inner circle is a stone slab fifteen feet long, which is supposed to have been the altar. Others claim that it was an astronomical observatory, and formed with a view to the location of the planets. Should this be true, it would suggest a civilization so remote that all traces of its memory have perished from the earth.

A more reasonable theory, however, than any of those men-

Stonehenge.

tioned would make these stones but the ruins of some old temple, where the people once assembled not only for worship but council. Other stone circles have been discovered and attributed to ages running back from ten to fifty thousand years. Whatever the purpose of this strange monument may have been, it stands to-day for an age and a people whose name and nationality belong to the silences of the past.

The Fortunate Isles.

When King Arthur was about to die, he asked to be placed in a barge and transported to Avalon, the Isle of the Blessed. Ava-

lon was but another name for an island which the ancients located somewhere in the Western Sea. This legend is as old as Homer, who wrote of an Elysian land where there was neither snow nor rain. Here the heroes became immortal, and lived in constant sunshine. This is not to be confounded with the Elysium of the Latins, which was the blessed abode of the dead. The Gardens of Hesperides, with its golden apples, and the Fortunate Isles of Pindar, a Greek poet who lived five hundred years before our era, are but parts of this same legendary country. The poets in all ages have made it the theme of their most bewitching songs:

"Fair land of flowers, land of flame,
Of sun-born seas, of sea-born clime,
Of clouds low shephered and tame,
As white pet sheep at shearing time,
Of great, white, generous, high-born rain,
Of rainbows builded not in vain."—JOAQUIN MILLER.

Our Celtic forefathers caught the spirit and depicted a country of the most transcendent splendor. There the inhabitants knew neither weariness nor death.

"They need not the moon in that land of delight,
They need not the pale, pale star,
The sun is bright, by day and by night,
Where the souls of the blessed are.

"They till not the ground, they plow not the wave,
They labor not, never, oh, never,
Not a tear do they shed, not a sigh do they heave,
They are happy for ever and ever."—PINDAR.

Youths and maidens danced hand in hand upon the grass. Green trees, laden with apples, formed a beautiful forest, through which the sun shone in constant splendor. A fountain of perpetual youth flowed in the midst of the island. There, too, was a palace of glass floating in the air, to which went the spirits of the bards. Taliesin refers to this same enchanted palace, and declares that the spirit of Arthur was not confined to its enclosure. Sometimes this palace was represented as a glass mountain, and the early Teutons buried in the graves of their dead the claws of bears, with which to assist the spirits in climbing

its crystal sides.[1] The legend of Atlantis, an island submerged in the waters of the Western Ocean, is possibly of the same origin. At Easter dawn it was believed that cities arose to the surface and then disappeared. Perhaps no legend ever exerted a greater or more far-reaching influence than this.

[1] S. Baring-Gould.

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THE AGE OF CHIVALRY.

PART II.

THE MAB'I-NO'GE-ON.

THE MAB'I-NO'GE-ON.

CHAPTER I.

The Britons—Welsh Literature—The Welsh Bards—The Triads.

The Britons.

THE earliest inhabitants of Britain are supposed to have been a branch of that great family known in history as Celts. Cambria, which is a frequent name for Wales, is thought to be derived from Cymri, the name which the Welsh traditions apply to an immigrant people who entered the island from the adjacent continent. This name is thought to be identical with those of Cimmerians and Cimbri, under which the Greek and Roman historians describe a barbarous people, who spread themselves from the north of the Euxine over the whole of Northwestern Europe.

The origin of the names Wales and Welsh has been much canvassed. Some writers make them a derivation from Gael or Gaul, which names are said to signify "woodlanders;" others observe that Walsh, in the Northern languages, signifies a stranger, and that the aboriginal Britains were so called by those who at a later year invaded the island and possessed the greater part of it, the Saxons and Angles.

The Romans held Britain from the invasion of Julius Cæsar until the year four hundred and twenty,—that is, about five hundred years. In that time there must have been a wide diffusion

of their arts and institutions among the natives. The remains of roads, cities and fortifications show that they did much to develop and improve the country, while those of their villas and castles prove that many of the settlers possessed wealth and taste for the ornamental arts. Yet the Roman sway was sustained chiefly by force, and never extended over the entire island. The northern portion, now Scotland, remained independent, and the western portion, constituting Wales and Cornwall, was only nominally subjected.

Neither did the later invading hordes succeed in subduing the remoter sections of the island. For ages after the arrival of the Saxons under Hengist and Horsa, about the year four hundred and forty nine, the whole western coast of Britain was possessed by the aboriginal inhabitants, engaged in constant warfare with the invaders.

It has, therefore, been a favorite boast of the people of Wales and Cornwall, that the original British stock flourishes in its unmixed purity only among them. We see this notion flashing out in poetry occasionally, as when Gray, in "The Bard," prophetically describing Queen Elizabeth, who was of the Tudor, a Welsh race, says:

"Her eye proclaims her of the Britain line;"

and, contrasting the princes of the Tudor with those of the Norman race, he exclaims:

"All hail, ye genuine kings, Britannia's issue, hail!"

The Welsh Language and Literature.

The Welsh language is one of the oldest in Europe. It possesses poems the origin of which is referred with probability to the sixth century. The language of some of these is so antiquated, that the best scholars differ about the interpretation of many passages; but, generally speaking, the body of poetry which the Welsh possess, from the year one thousand downwards, is intelligible to those who are acquainted with the modern language.

Till within the last ninety years these compositions remained buried in the libraries of colleges or of individuals, and so diffi-

cult of access that no successful attempt was made to give them to the world. This reproach was removed, after ineffectual appeals to the patriotism of the gentry of Wales, by Owen Jones, a furrier of London, who at his own expense collected and published the chief productions of Welsh literature, under the title of the Myvyrian Archæology of Wales. In this task he was assisted by Dr. Owen and other Welsh scholars.

After the cessation of Jones's exertions, the old apathy returned. Dr. Owen exerted himself to obtain support for the publication of the Mabinogeon or Prose Tales of the Welsh, but died without accomplishing his purpose, which has since been carried into execution by Lady Charlotte Guest. The legends which fill the remainder of this volume are taken from this work, of which we have already spoken more fully in the introductory chapter to the First Part.

The Welsh Bards.

The authors to whom the oldest Welsh poems are attributed are Aneurin, who is supposed to have lived about the middle of the sixth century, and Taliesin, Llywarch Hen (Llywarch the Aged), and Myrddin or Merlin, who were a few years later. The authenticity of the poems which bear their names has been assailed, and it is still an open question how many and which of them are authentic, though it is hardly to be doubted that some are so. The poem of Aneurin entitled the "Gododin" bears very strong marks of authenticity. Aneurin was one of the Northern Britons, who have left to that part of the district they inhabited the name of Cumberland, or Land of the Cymri. In this poem he laments the defeat of his countrymen by the Saxons at the battle of Cattraeth, in consequence of having partaken too freely of the mead before joining in combat. The bard himself and two of his fellow-warriors were all who escaped from the field. A portion of this poem has been translated by Gray, of which the following is an extract:

"To Cattraeth's vale, in glittering row,
Twice two hundred warriors go;
Every warrior's manly neck
Chains of regal honor deck,
Wreathed in many a golden link;

From the golden cup they drink
Nectar that the bees produce,
Or the grape's exalted juice.
Flushed with mirth and hope they burn,
But none to Cattraeth's vale return,
Save Aëron brave, and Conan strong,
Bursting through the bloody throng,
And I, the meanest of them all,
That live to weep, and sing their fall."

The works of Taliesin, whom Tennyson terms "our fullest throat of song," are of much more questionable authenticity. There is a story of the adventures of Taliesin so strongly marked with mythical traits as to cast suspicion on the writings attributed to him. This story will be found in the subsequent pages.

The Triads.

The Triads are a peculiar species of poetical composition, of which the Welsh bards have left numerous examples. They are enumerations of a triad of persons, or events, or observations, strung together in one short sentence. This form of composition, originally invented, in all likelihood, to assist the memory, has been raised by the Welsh to a degree of elegance of which it hardly at first sight appears susceptible. The Triads are of all ages, some of them probably as old as anything in the language. Short as they are individually, the collection in the Myvyrian Archæology occupies more than one hundred and seventy pages of double columns. We will give some specimens, beginning with personal triads, and giving the first place to one of King Arthur's own composition:

"I have three heroes in battle:
Mael the tall, and Llyr, with his army,
And Caradoc, the pillar of Wales."

The three principal bards of the island of Britain are given as

"Merlin Ambrose
Merlin the son of Morfyn, called also Merlin the Wild,
And Taliesin, the chief of the bards."

The three golden-tongued knights of King Arthur's court are said to have been

"Gawain, son of Gwyar,
Drydvas, son of Tryphin,
And Eliwlod, son of Madag, ap Uther."

The three great feasts of the isle of Britain fall under this same rule of three:

"The feast of Caswallaun, after repelling Julius Cæsar from this isle;
The feast of Aurelius Ambrosius, after he had conquered the Saxons;
And the feast of King Arthur, at Caerleon upon Usk."

Some of this composition is not only highly poetic, but, considering the age, remarkably philosophic:

"Hast thou heard what Dremhidydd sung,
An ancient watchman on the castle walls?
A refusal is better than a promise unperformed."

"Hast thou heard what Llenleawg sung,
The noble chief wearing the golden torques?
The grave is better than a life of want."

"Hast thou heard what Garselit sung,
The Irishman whom it is safe to follow?
Sin is bad, if long pursued."

"Hast thou heard what Avaon sung?
The son of Taliesin, of the recording verse?
The cheek will not conceal the anguish of the heart."

"Didst thou hear what Llywarch sung,
The intrepid and brave old man?
Greet kindly, though there be no acquaintance."

The number three had a peculiar fascination for our Celtic ancestors. They bound up their ideas in sheaves of three. As poets they have exerted but little influence upon the world, although much that they said is worthy a lasting place in any language. The following could not well be improved upon, either for conciseness or keenness of observation:

"The three foundations of genius: The gift of God, human exertion, and the results of life."

"The three pillars of judgment: Bold design, frequent practice, and frequent mistakes."

"The three first requisites of genius: An eye to see nature, a heart to feel it, and a resolution that dares to follow."

"The three pillars of learning: Seeing much, suffering much, and studying much."

"The three qualifications of poetry: Endowment of genius, judgment from experience, and felicity of thought."—LLYWARCH HEN.

CHAPTER II.

The Lady of the Fountain.

Ky'non's Adventure.

King Arthur was at Caerleon upon Usk; and one day he sat in his chamber, and with him were Owain the son of Urien, and Kynon the son of Clydno, and Kay the son of Kyner, and Guinevere and her handmaidens at needlework by the window. In the centre of the chamber King Arthur sat upon a seat of green rushes,[1] over which was spread a covering of flame-colored satin, and a cushion of red satin was under his elbow.

Then Arthur spoke. "If I thought you would not disparage me," said he, "I would sleep while I wait for my repast; and you can entertain one another with relating tales, and can obtain a flagon of mead and some meat from Kay." And the king went to sleep. And Kynon the son of Clydno asked Kay for that which Arthur had promised them. "I too will have the good tale which he promised me," said Kay. "Nay," answered Kynon; "fairer will it be for thee to fulfil Arthur's behest in the first place, and then we will tell thee the best tale that we know." "Now," said Kay, "it is time for you to give me my story." "Kynon," said Owain, "do thou pay to Kay the tale that is his due." "I will do so," answered Kynon.

"I was the only son of my mother and father, and I was exceedingly aspiring, and my daring was very great. I thought

1 The custom of strewing the floor with rushes is well known to have existed in England during the Middle Ages, and also in France.

there was no enterprise in the world too mighty for me, and after I had achieved all the adventures that were in my own country, I equipped myself, and set forth to journey through deserts and distant regions. And at length it chanced that I came to the fairest valley in the world, wherein were trees all of equal growth; and a river ran through the valley, and a path was by the side of the river. And I followed the path until midday, and continued my journey along the remainder of the valley until the evening; and at the extremity of a plain I came to a large and lustrous castle, at the foot of which was a torrent. And I approached the castle, and there I beheld two youths with yellow curling hair, each with a frontlet of gold upon his head, and clad in a garment of yellow satin, and they had gold clasps upon their insteps. In the hand of each of them was an ivory bow, strung with the sinews of the stag, and their arrows and their shafts were of the bone of the whale, and were winged with peacock's feathers.

"A shefe of peacock arrows bright and kene
Under his belt he bare ful thriftily."—CHAUCER.

The shafts also had golden heads. And they had daggers with blades of gold, and with hilts of the bone of the whale. And they were shooting at a mark.

"And a little away from them I saw a man in the prime of life, with his beard newly shorn, clad in a robe and mantle of yellow satin, and round the top of his mantle was a band of gold lace. On his feet were shoes of variegated leather, fastened by two bosses of gold. When I saw him I went towards him and saluted him; and such was his courtesy, that he no sooner received my greeting than he returned it. And he went with me towards the castle. Now there were no dwellers in the castle, except those who were in one hall And there I saw four and twenty damsels, embroidering satin at a window. And this I tell thee, Kay, that the least fair of them was fairer than the fairest maid thou didst ever behold in the island of Britain; and the least lovely of them was more lovely than Guinevere, the wife of Arthur, when she appeared loveliest, at the feast of Easter. They rose up at my coming, and six of them took my horse, and divested me of my armor, and six others took my arms, and washed them in a vessel till they were perfectly bright.

And the third six spread cloths upon the tables and prepared meat. And the fourth six took off my soiled garments and placed others upon me, namely, an under-vest and a doublet of fine linen, and a robe and a surcoat, and a mantle of yellow satin, with a broad gold band upon the mantle. And they placed cushions both beneath and around me, with coverings of red linen. And I sat down. Now the six maidens who had taken my horse unharnessed him as well as if they had been the best squires in the island of Britain.

"Then behold they brought bowls of silver, wherein was water to wash, and towels of linen, some green and some white; and I washed. And in a little while the man sat down at the table. And I sat next to him, and below me sat all the maidens, except those who waited on us. And the table was of silver, and the cloths upon the table were of linen. And no vessel was served upon the table that was not either of gold or of silver or of buffalo-horn:

> "The highly-honored buffalo-horn, Hirlas,
> Enriched with ancient silver."—KYVEILIOG.

And our meat was brought to us. And verily, Kay, I saw there every sort of meat and every sort of liquor that I ever saw elsewhere; but the meat and the liquor were better served there than I ever saw them in any other place.

"Until the repast was half over, neither the man nor any one of the damsels spoke a single word to me; but when the man perceived that it would be more agreeable for me to converse than to eat any more, he began to inquire of me who I was. Then I told the man who I was, and what was the cause of my journey, and said that I was seeking whether any one was superior to me, or whether I could gain the mastery over all. The man looked upon me, and he smiled and said, 'If I did not fear to do thee a mischief, I would show thee that which thou seekest.' Then I desired him to speak freely. And he said: 'Sleep here to-night, and in the morning arise early, and take the road upwards through the valley, until thou reachest the wood. A little way within the wood thou wilt come to a large sheltered glade, with a mound in the centre. And thou wilt see a black man of great stature on the top of the mound. He has but one foot,

and one eye in the middle of his forehead. He is the woodward of that wood. And thou wilt see a thousand wild animals grazing around him. Inquire of him the way out of the glade, and he will reply to thee briefly, and will point out the road by which thou shalt find that which thou art in quest of.'

"And long seemed that night to me. And the next morning I arose and equipped myself, and mounted my horse, and proceeded straight through the valley to the wood, and at length I arrived at the glade.

> "Deep in the forest was a little dell
> High overarchëd with the leafy sweep
> Of a broad oak, through whose gnarled roots there fell
> A slender rill that sung itself asleep,
> Where its continuous toil had scooped a well
> To please the fairy folk; breathlessly deep
> The stillness was, save when the dreaming brook
> From its small urn a drizzly murmur shook."—LOWELL.

And the black man was there, sitting upon the top of the mound; and I was three times more astonished at the number of wild animals that I beheld than the man had said I should be. Then I inquired of him the way, and he asked me roughly whither I would go. And when I had told him who I was, and what I sought, 'Take,' said he, 'that path that leads toward the head of the glade, and there thou wilt find an open space like to a large valley, and in the midst of it a tall tree. Under this tree is a fountain, and by the side of the fountain a marble slab, and on the marble slab a silver bowl, attached by a chain of silver, that it may not be carried away. Take the bowl, and throw a bowlful of water on the slab. And if thou dost not find trouble in that adventure, thou needest not seek it during the rest of thy life.'

"So I journeyed on until I reached the summit of the steep. And there I found everything as the black man had described it to me. And I went up to the tree, and beneath it I saw the fountain, and by its side the marble slab, and the silver bowl fastened by the chain. Then I took the bowl, and cast a bowlful of water upon the slab. And immediately I heard a mighty peal of thunder, so that heaven and earth seemed to tremble with its fury. And after the thunder came a shower; and of a

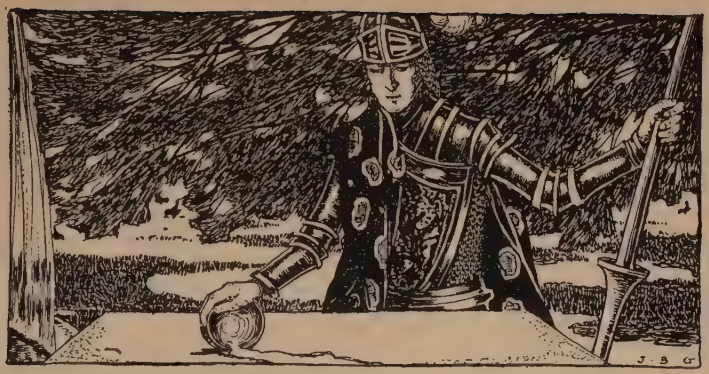
truth I tell thee, Kay, that it was such a shower as neither man nor beast could endure and live.

> "Through tattered foliage the hail tears crashing,
> The blue lightning flashes,
> The rapid hail clashes,
> The white waves are tumbling,
> And, in one baffled roar,
> Like the toothless sea mumbling
> A rock-bristled shore,
> The thunder is rumbling
> And crashing and crumbling,—
> Will silence return never more?"—LOWELL.

I turned my horse's flank toward the shower, and placed the beak of my shield over his head and neck, while I held the upper part of it over my own neck. And thus I withstood the shower. And presently the sky became clear, and with that, behold, the birds lighted upon the tree, and sang. And truly, Kay, I never heard any melody equal to that, either before or since. And when I was most charmed with listening to the birds, lo! a chiding voice was heard of one approaching me, and saying: 'O knight, what has brought thee hither? What evil have I done to thee, that thou shouldst act towards me and my possessions as thou hast this day? Dost thou not know that the shower to-day has left in my dominions neither man nor beast alive that was exposed to it?' And thereupon, behold, a knight on a black horse appeared, clothed in jet-black velvet, and with a tabard of black linen about him. And we charged each other, and, as the onset was furious, it was not long before I was overthrown. Then the knight passed the shaft of his lance through the bridle-rein of my horse, and rode off with the two horses, leaving me where I was. And he did not even bestow so much notice upon me as to imprison me, nor did he despoil me of my arms. So I returned along the road by which I had come. And when I reached the glade where the black man was, I confess to thee, Kay, it is a marvel that I did not melt down into a liquid pool, through the shame that I felt at the black man's derison. And that night I came to the same castle where I had spent the night preceding. And I was more agreeably entertained that night than I had been the night before. And I conversed freely with the inmates of the

castle; and none of them alluded to my expedition to the fountain, neither did I mention it to any. And I remained there that night. When I arose on the morrow, I found ready saddled a dark bay palfrey, with nostrils as red as scarlet. And after putting on my armor, and leaving there my blessing, I returned to my own court. And that horse I still possess, and he is in the stable yonder. And I declare that I would not part with him for the best palfrey in the island of Britain.

"Now, of a truth, Kay, no man ever before confessed to an adventure so much to his own discredit; and verily it seems strange to me that neither before nor since have I heard of any person who knew of this adventure, and that the subject of it should exist within King Arthur's dominions without any other person lighting upon it."



CHAPTER III.

The Lady of the Fountain (Continued).

O'wain's Adventure.

"Now," quoth Owain, "would it not be well to go and endeavor to discover that place?"

"By the hand of my friend," said Kay, "often dost thou utter that with thy tongue which thou wouldest not make good with thy deeds."

"In very truth," said Guinevere, "it were better thou wert hanged, Kay, than to use such uncourteous speech towards a man like Owain."

"By the hand of my friend, good lady," said Kay, "thy praise of Owain is not greater than mine."

With that Arthur awoke, and asked if he had not been sleeping a little.

"Yes, lord," answered Owain, "thou hast slept awhile."

"Is it time for us to go to meat?"

"It is, lord," said Owain.

Then the horn for washing was sounded,[1] and the king and all his household sat down to eat. And when the meal was ended, Owain withdrew to his lodging, and made ready his horse and his arms.

On the morrow with the dawn of day he put on his armor, and mounted his charger, and travelled through distant lands,

[1] Dinner was always preceded by washing the hands at the signal of a horn.

and over desert mountains. And at length he arrived at the valley which Kynon had described to him, and he was certain that it was the same that he sought. And journeying along the valley, by the side of the river, he followed its course till he came to the plain, and within sight of the castle. When he approached the castle, he saw the youths shooting with their bows, in the place where Kynon had seen them, and the yellow man, to whom the castle belonged, standing hard by. And no sooner had Owain saluted the yellow man than he was saluted by him in return.

And he went forward towards the castle, and there he saw the chamber; and when he had entered the chamber, he beheld the maidens working at satin embroidery, in chains of gold. And their beauty and their comeliness seemed to Owain far greater than Kynon had represented to him. And they arose to wait upon Owain, as they had done to Kynon. And the meal which they set before him gave even more satisfaction to Owain than it had done to Kynon.

About the middle of the repast the yellow man asked Owain the object of his journey. And Owain made it known to him, and said, "I am in quest of the knight who guards the fountain." Upon this the yellow man smiled, and said that he was as loath to point out that adventure to him as he had been to Kynon. However, he described the whole to Owain, and they retired to rest.

The next morning Owain found his horse made ready for him by the damsels, and he set forward and came to the glade where the black man was. And the stature of the black man seemed more wonderful to Owain than it had done to Kynon; and Owain asked of him his road, and he showed it to him. And Owain followed the road till he came to the green tree; and he beheld the fountain, and the slab beside the fountain, with the bowl upon it. And Owain took the bowl and threw a bowlful of water upon the slab. And lo! the thunder was heard, and after the thunder came the shower, more violent than Kynon had described, and after the shower the sky became bright. And immediately the birds came and settled upon the tree and sang.

"Never black birds, never thrushes,
Nor small finches, sing as sweet

When the sun strikes through the bushes
To their crimson, clinging feet,
And their pretty eyes look sideways to the
summer heavens complete."

—Mrs. E. B. Browning.

And when their song was most pleasing to Owain, he beheld a knight coming towards him through the valley; and he prepared to receive him, and encountered him violently. Having broken both their lances, they drew their swords and fought blade to blade. Then Owain struck the knight a blow, through his helmet, head-piece, and visor, and through the skin, and the flesh, and the bone, until it wounded the very brain. Then the black knight felt that he had received a mortal wound, upon which he turned his horse's head and fled. And Owain pursued him, and followed close upon him, although he was not near enough to strike him with his sword. Then Owain descried a vast and resplendent castle; and they came to the castle gate. And the black knight was allowed to enter, and the portcullis was let fall upon Owain; and it struck his horse behind the saddle, and cut him in two, and carried away the rowels of the spurs that were upon Owain's heels. And the portcullis descended to the floor. And the rowels of the spurs and part of the horse were without, and Owain with the other part of the horse remained between the two gates, and the inner gate was closed, so that Owain could not go thence; and Owain was in a perplexing situation. And while he was in this state, he could see through an aperture in the gate a street facing him, with a row of houses on each side. And he beheld a maiden, with yellow, curling hair, and a frontlet of gold upon her head; and she was clad in a dress of yellow satin, and on her feet were shoes of variegated leather. And she approached the gate, and desired that it should be opened. "Heaven knows, lady," said Owain, "it is no more possible for me to open to thee from hence than it is for thee to set me free." And he told her his name, and who he was. "Truly," said the damsel, "it is very sad that thou canst not be released; and every woman ought to succor thee, for I know there is no one more faithful in the service of ladies than thou. Therefore," quoth she, "whatever is in my power to do for thy release, I will do it. Take this ring

and put it on thy finger, with the stone inside thy hand, and close thy hand upon the stone. And as long as thou concealest it, it will conceal thee. When they come forth to fetch thee, they will be much grieved that they cannot find thee. And I will await thee on the horseblock yonder, and thou wilt be able to see me, though I cannot see thee. Therefore come and place thy hand upon my shoulder, that I may know that thou art near me. And by the way that I go hence, do thou accompany me."

Then the maiden went away from Owain, and he did all that she had told him. And the people of the castle came to seek Owain to put him to death; and when they found nothing but the half of his horse, they were sorely grieved.

And Owain vanished from among them, and went to the maiden, and placed his hand upon her shoulder; whereupon she set off, and Owain followed her, until they came to the door of a large and beautiful chamber, and the maiden opened it, and they went in. And Owain looked around the chamber, and behold there was not a single nail in it that was not painted with gorgeous colors, and there was not a single panel that had not sundry images in gold portrayed upon it.

The maiden kindled a fire, and took water in a silver bowl, and gave Owain water to wash. Then she placed before him a silver table, inlaid with gold; upon which was a cloth of yellow linen, and she brought him food. And, of a truth, Owain never saw any kind of meat that was not there in abundance, but it was better cooked there than he had ever found it in any other place. And there was not one vessel from which he was served that was not of gold or of silver. And Owain eat and drank until late in the afternoon, when, lo! they heard a mighty clamor in the castle, and Owain asked the maiden what it was. "They are administering extreme unction," said she, "to the nobleman who owns the castle." And she prepared a couch for Owain which was meet for Arthur himself, and Owain went to sleep.

And a little after daybreak he heard an exceeding loud clamor and wailing, and he asked the maiden what was the cause of it. "They are bearing to the church the body of the nobleman who owned the castle."

And Owain rose up, and clothed himself, and opened a window

of the chamber, and looked towards the castle; and he could see neither the bounds nor the extent of the hosts that filled the streets. And they were fully armed; and a vast number of women were with them, both on horseback and on foot, and all the ecclesiastics in the city singing. In the midst of the throng he beheld the bier, over which was a veil of white linen; and wax tapers were burning beside and around it; and none that supported the bier was lower in rank than a powerful baron.

Never did Owain see an assemblage so gorgeous with silk and satin. And, following the train, he beheld a lady with yellow hair falling over her shoulders, and stained with blood; and about her a dress of yellow satin, which was torn. Upon her feet were shoes of variegated leather. And it was a marvel that the ends of her fingers were not bruised from the violence with which she smote her hands together. Truly she would have been the fairest lady Owain ever saw, had she been in her usual guise. And her cry was louder than the shout of the men or the clamor of the trumpets. No sooner had he beheld the lady than he became inflamed with her love, so that it took entire possession of him.

Then he inquired of the maiden who the lady was. "Heaven knows," replied the maiden, "she is the fairest, and the most chaste, and the most liberal, and the most noble of women. She is my mistress, and she is called the Countess of the Fountain, the wife of him whom thou didst slay yesterday." "Verily," said Owain, "she is the woman that I love best." "Verily," said the maiden, "she shall also love thee, not a little."

Then the maiden prepared a repast for Owain, and truly he thought he had never before so good a meal, nor was he ever so well served. Then she left him, and went towards the castle. When she came there, she found nothing but mourning and sorrow; and the countess in her chamber could not bear the sight of any one through grief. Luned, for that was the name of the maiden, saluted her, but the countess answered her not.

> "Alas! for the loss of her who was equal to Luned,
> That gem of light."—WELSH BARD.

And the maiden bent down towards her, and said, "What aileth

thee, that thou answerest no one to-day?" "Luned," said the countess, "what change hath befallen thee, that thou hast not come to visit me in my grief? It was wrong in thee, and I so sorely afflicted." "Truly," said Luned, "I thought thy good sense was greater than I find it to be. Is it well for thee to mourn after that good man, or for anything else that thou canst not have?" "I declare to Heaven," said the countess, "that in the whole world there is not a man equal to him." "Not so," said Luned, "for an ugly man would be as good as, or better than he." "I declare to Heaven," said the countess, "that were it not repugnant to me to put to death one whom I have brought up, I would have thee executed for making such a comparison to me. As it is, I will banish thee." "I am glad," said Luned, "that thou hast no other cause to do so than that I would have been of service to thee, where thou didst not know what was to thine advantage. Henceforth, evil betide whichever of us shall make the first advance towards reconciliation to the other, whether I should seek an invitation from thee, or thou of thine own accord shouldst send to invite me."

With that Luned went forth; and the countess arose and followed her to the door of the chamber, and began coughing loudly. And when Luned looked back, the countess beckoned to her, and she returned to the countess. "In truth," said the countess, "evil is thy disposition; but if thou knowest what is to my advantage, declare it to me." "I will do so," said she.

"Thou knowest that, except by warfare and arms, it is impossible for thee to preserve thy possessions; delay not, therefore, to seek some one who can defend them." "And how can I do that?" said the countess. "I will tell thee," said Luned; "unless thou canst defend the fountain, thou canst not maintain thy dominions; and no one can defend the fountain except it be a knight of Arthur's household. I will go to Arthur's court, and ill betide me if I return not thence with a warrior who can guard the fountain as well as, or even better than he who defended it formerly." "That will be hard to perform," said the countess. "Go, however, and make proof of that which thou hast promised."

Luned set out under the pretence of going to Arthur's court;

but she went back to the mansion where she had left Owain, and she tarried there as long as it might have taken her to travel to the court of King Arthur and back. And at the end of that time she apparelled herself, and went to visit the countess. And the countess was much rejoiced when she saw her, and inquired what news she brought from the court. "I bring thee the best of news," said Luned, "for I have compassed the object of my mission. When wilt thou that I should present to thee the chieftain who has come with me hither?" "Bring him here to visit me to-morrow," said the countess, "and I will cause the town to be assembled by that time."

And Luned returned home. And the next day, at noon, Owain arrayed himself in a coat and a surcoat, and a mantle of yellow satin, upon which was a broad band of gold lace; and on his feet were high shoes of variegated leather, which were fastened by golden clasps, in the form of lions. And they proceeded to the chamber of the countess.

Right glad was the countess of their coming. And she gazed steadfastly upon Owain, and said, "Luned, this knight has not the look of a traveller." "What harm is there in that, lady?" said Luned. "I am certain," said the countess, "that no other man than this chased the soul from the body of my lord." "So much the better for thee, lady," said Luned, "for had he not been stronger than thy lord, he could not have deprived him of life. There is no remedy for that which is past, be it as it may." "Go back to thine abode," said the countess, "and I will take counsel."

The next day the countess caused all her subjects to assemble, and showed them that her earldom was left defenceless, and that it could not be protected but with horse and arms, and military skill. "Therefore," said she, "this is what I offer for your choice: either let one of you take me, or give your consent for me to take a husband from elsewhere, to defend my dominions."

So they came to the determination that it was better that she should have permission to marry some one from elsewhere; and thereupon she sent for the bishops and archbishops, to celebrate her nuptials with Owain. And the men of the earldom did Owain homage.

And Owain defended the fountain with lance and sword. And

this is the manner in which he defended it. Whensoever a knight came there, he overthrew him, and sold him for his full worth. And what he thus gained he divided among his barons and his knights, and no man in the whole world could be more beloved than he was by his subjects. And it was thus for the space of three years.

"Hast thou heard of Owain the Peerless?
For three years he ruled
His people like a god from heaven."—TRIAD.

CHAPTER IV.

The Lady of the Fountain (Continued).

Ga'wain's Adventure—Adventure of the Lion—Lu'ned.

It befell that, as Gawain went forth one day with King Arthur, he perceived him to be very sad and sorrowful. And Gawain was much grieved to see Arthur in this state, and he questioned him, saying, "O my lord, what has befallen thee?" "In sooth, Gawain," said Arthur, "I am grieved concerning Owain, whom I have lost these three years; and I shall certainly die if the fourth year pass without my seeing him. Now I am sure that it is through the tale which Kynon, the son of Clydno, related, that I have lost Owain." "There is no need for thee," said Gawain, "to summon to arms thy whole dominions on this account, for thou thyself, and the men of thy household, will be able to avenge Owain if he be slain, or to set him free if he be in prison; and, if alive, to bring him back with thee." And it was settled according to what Gawain had said.

Then Arthur and the men of his household prepared to go and seek Owain. And Kynon, the son of Clydno, acted as their guide. And Arthur came to the castle where Kynon had been before. And when he came there, the youths were shooting in the same place, and the yellow man was standing hard by. When the yellow man saw Arthur, he greeted him and invited him to the castle. And Arthur accepted his invitation, and they entered

the castle together. And great as was the number of his retinue, their presence was scarcely observed in the castle, so vast was its extent. And the maidens rose up to wait on them. And the service of the maidens appeared to them all to excel any attendance they had ever met with; and even the pages, who had charge of the horses, were no worse served that night than Arthur himself would have been in his own palace.

The next morning Arthur set out thence, with Kynon for his guide, and came to the place where the black man was. And the stature of the black man was more surprising to Arthur than it had been represented to him. And they came to the top of the wooded steep, and traversed the valley, till they reached the green tree, where they saw the fountain and the bowl and the slab. And upon that Kay came to Arthur, and spoke to him. "My lord," said he, "I know the meaning of all this, and my request is that thou wilt permit me to throw the water on the slab, and to receive the first adventure that may befall." And Arthur gave him leave.

Then Kay threw a bowlful of water upon the slab, and immediately there came the thunder, and after the thunder the shower. And such a thunder-storm they had never known before. After the shower had ceased, the sky became clear, and on looking at the tree, they beheld it completely leafless. Then the birds descended upon the tree. And the song of the birds was far sweeter than any strain they had ever heard before. Then they beheld a knight, on a coal-black horse, clothed in black satin, coming rapidly towards them. And Kay met him and encountered him, and it was not long before Kay was overthrown. And the knight withdrew. And Arthur and his host encamped for the night.

And when they arose in the morning, they perceived the signal of combat upon the lance of the knight. Then, one by one, all the household of Arthur went forth to combat the knight, until there was not one that was not overthrown by him, except Arthur and Gawain. And Arthur armed himself to encounter the knight. "O my lord," said Gawain, "permit me to fight with him first." And Arthur permitted him. And he went forth to meet the knight, having over himself and his horse a satin robe of honor, and in this dress he was not known by any

of the host. And they charged each other, and fought all that day until the evening. And neither of them was able to unhorse the other. And so it was the next day; they broke their lances in the shock, but neither of them could obtain the mastery.

And the third day they fought with exceeding strong lances. And they were incensed with rage, and fought furiously, even until noon. And they gave each other such a shock that the girths of their horses were broken, so that they fell over their horses' cruppers to the ground. And they rose up speedily and drew their swords, and resumed the combat. And all they that witnessed their encounter felt assured that they had never before seen two men so valiant or so powerful. And had it been midnight, it would have been light, from the fire that flashed from their weapons. And the knight gave Gawain a blow that turned his helmet from off his face, so that the knight saw that it was Gawain. Then Owain said, "My lord Gawain, I did not know thee for my cousin, owing to the robe of honor that enveloped thee; take my sword and my arms." Said Gawain, "Thou, Owain, art the victor; take thou my sword." And with that Arthur saw that they were conversing, and advanced toward them. "My lord Arthur," said Gawain, "here is Owain, who has vanquished me, and will not take my arms." "My lord," said Owain, "it is he that has vanquished me, and he will not take my sword." "Give me your swords," said Arthur, "and then neither of you has vanquished the other." Then Owain put his arms around Arthur's neck, and they embraced. And all the host hurried forward to see Owain, and to embrace him. And there was nigh being a loss of life, so great was the press.

And they retired that night, and the next day Arthur prepared to depart. "My lord," said Owain, "this is not well of thee. For I have been absent from thee these three years, and during all that time, up to this very day, I have been preparing a banquet for thee, knowing that thou wouldst come to seek me. Tarry with me, therefore, until thou and thy attendants have recovered the fatigues of the journey, and have been anointed."

And they all proceeded to the castle of the Countess of the Fountain, and the banquet which had been three years preparing was consumed in three months. Never had they a more delicious or agreeable banquet. And Arthur prepared to depart,

Then he sent an embassy to the countess to beseech her to permit Owain to go with him, for the space of three months, that he might show him to the nobles and the fair dames of the island of Britain. And the countess gave her consent, although it was very painful to her. So Owain came with Arthur to the island of Britain. And when he was once more amongst his kindred and friends, he remained three years, instead of three months, with them.

The Adventure of the Lion.

And as Owain sat one day at meat, in the city of Caerleon upon Usk, behold a damsel entered the hall, upon a bay horse, with a curling mane, and covered with foam; and the bridle, and as much as were seen of the saddle, were of gold. And the damsel was arrayed in a dress of yellow satin. And she came up to Owain, and took the ring from off his hand. "Thus," said she, "shall be treated the deceiver, the traitor, the faithless, the disgraced, and the beardless." And she turned her horse's head and departed.[1]

"And so befell that after the thridde cours,
While that this king sat thus in his nobley,
Herking his minstralles thir thinges play,
Beforne him at his bord deliciously,
In at the halle door all sodenly
Ther came a knight upon a stede of bras,
And in his hond a brod mirrour of glas;
Upon his thombe he had of gold a ring,
And by his side a naked sword hanging;
And up he rideth to the highe bord.
In all the halle ne was ther spoke a word,
For mervaille of this knight; him to behold,
Full besily they waiten, young and old."—CHAUCER.

Then his adventure came to Owain's remembrance, and he was sorrowful. And having finished eating, he went to his own abode, and made preparations that night. And the next day he arose, but did not go to the court, nor did he return to the Countess of the Fountain, but wandered to the distant parts of the earth and to uncultivated mountains. And he remained

[1] The custom of riding into a hall while the lord and his guests sat at meat, might be illustrated by numerous passages of ancient romance and history.

The Finding of Owain.

there until all his apparel was worn out, and his body was wasted away, and his hair was grown long. And he went about with the wild beasts, and fed with them, until they became familiar with him. But at length he became so weak that he could no longer bear them company. Then he descended from the mountains to the valley, and came to a park, that was the fairest in the world, and belonged to a charitable lady.

One day the lady and her attendants went forth to walk by a lake that was in the middle of the park. And they saw the form of a man, lying as if dead. And they were terrified. Nevertheless they went near him, and touched him, and they saw that there was life in him. And the lady returned to the castle, and took a flask full of precious ointment and gave it to one of her maidens. "Go with this," said she, "and take with thee yonder horse, and clothing, and place them near the man we saw just now; and anoint him with this balsam near his heart; and if there is life in him, he will revive, through the efficiency of this balsam. Then watch what he will do."

And the maiden departed from her, and went and poured of the balsam upon Owain, and left the horse and the garments hard by, and went a little way off and hid herself to watch him. In a short time she saw him begin to move; and he rose up, and looked at his person, and became ashamed of the unseemliness of his appearance. Then he perceived the horse and the garments that were near him. And he clothed himself, and with difficulty mounted the horse. Then the damsel discovered herself to him, and saluted him. And he and the maiden proceeded to the castle, and the maiden conducted him to a pleasant chamber, and kindled a fire, and left him.

And he stayed at the castle three months, till he was restored to his former guise, and became even more comely than he had ever been before. And Owain rendered signal service to the lady, in a controversy with a powerful neighbor, so that he made ample requital to her for her hospitality; and he took his departure.

And as he journeyed he heard a loud yelling in a wood. And it was repeated a second and a third time. And Owain went towards the spot, and beheld a huge craggy mound, in the middle of the wood, on the side of which was a gray rock. And

there was a cleft in the rock, and a serpent was within the cleft. And near the rock stood a black lion, and every time the lion sought to go thence the serpent darted towards him to attack him. And Owain unsheathed his sword, and drew near to the rock; and as the serpent sprung out he struck him with his sword and cut him in two. And he dried his sword, and went on his way as before. But behold the lion followed him, and played about him, as though it had been a greyhound that he had reared.

They proceeded thus throughout the day, until the evening. And when it was time for Owain to take his rest, he dismounted, and turned his horse loose in a flat and wooded meadow. And he struck fire, and when the fire was kindled, the lion brought him fuel enough to last for three nights. And the lion disappeared. And presently the lion returned, bearing a fine large roebuck. And he threw it down before Owain, who went towards the fire with it.

And Owain took the roebuck, and skinned it, and placed collops of its flesh upon skewers round the fire. The rest of the buck he gave to the lion to devour.

Lu'ned.

Presently Owain heard a deep groan near him, and a second, and a third. And the place whence the groans proceeded was a cave in the rock; and Owain went near, and called out to know who it was that groaned so piteously. And a voice answered, "I am Luned, the handmaiden of the Countess of the Fountain." "And what dost thou here?" said he. "I am imprisoned," said she, "on account of the knight who came from Arthur's court and married the countess. And he staid a short time with her, but he afterwards departed for the court of Arthur, and has not returned since. And two of the countess's pages traduced him, and called him a deceiver. And because I said I would vouch for it he would come before long and maintain his cause against both of them, they imprisoned me in this cave, and said that I should be put to death unless he came to deliver me by a certain day; and that is no further off than to-morrow, and I have no one to send to seek him for me. His name is Owain, the son of Urien." "And art thou certain that if that knight knew all

this, he would come to thy rescue?" "I am most certain of it," said she.

When the collops were cooked, Owain divided them into two parts, between himself and the maiden, and then Owain laid himself down to sleep; and never did sentinel keep stricter watch over his lord than the lion that night over Owain.

And the next day there came the two pages with a great troop of attendants to take Luned from her cell and put her to death. And Owain asked them what charge they had against her. And they told him of the compact that was between them, as the maiden had done the night before. "And," said they, "Owain has failed her, therefore we are taking her to be burnt." "Truly," said Owain," "he is a good knight, and if he knew that the maiden was in such peril, I marvel that he came not to her rescue. But if you will accept me in his stead, I will do battle with you." "We will," said the youths.

And they attacked Owain, and he was hard beset by them. And with that, the lion came to Owain's assistance, and they two got the better of the young men. And they said to him, "Chieftain, it was not agreed that we should fight save with thyself alone," and it is harder for us to contend with yonder animal than with thee." And Owain put the lion in the place where Luned had been imprisoned, and blocked up the door with stones. And he went to fight with the young men as before. But Owain had not his usual strength, and the two youths pressed hard upon him. And the lion roared incessantly at seeing Owain in trouble. And he burst through the wall, until he found a way out, and rushed upon the young men and instantly slew them. So Luned was saved from being burned.

Then Owain returned with Luned to the castle of the Lady of the Fountain. And when he went thence, he took the countess with him to Arthur's court, and she was his wife as long as she lived.

> "The soul of Owain ap Urien,
> May its Lord consider its exigencies!
> Reged's chief the green turf covers."—TALIESIN.

CHAPTER V.

Ge'raint, the Son of Erbin—The Knight of the Sparrow-Hawk.

Ge'raint.

ARTHUR was accustomed to hold his court at Caerleon upon Usk. And there he held it seven Easters and five Christmases. And once upon a time he held his court there at Whitsuntide. For Caerleon was the place most easy of access in his dominions, both by sea and by land. And there were assembled nine crowned kings, who were his tributaries, and likewise earls and barons. For they were his invited guests at all the high festivals, unless they were prevented by any great hinderance. And when he was at Caerleon holding his court, thirteen churches were set apart for mass. And thus they were appointed: one church for Arthur and his kings, and his guests; and the second for Guinevere and her ladies; and the third for the steward of the household and the suitors; and the fourth for the Franks and the other officers; and the other nine churches were for the nine masters of the household, and chiefly for Gawain, for he, from the eminence of his warlike fame, and from the nobleness of his birth, was the most exalted of the nine. And there was no other arrangement respecting the churches than that which we have here mentioned.

And on Whit-Tuesday, as the king sat at the banquet, lo, there entered a tall, fair-headed youth, clad in a coat and surcoat of

satin, and a golden-hilted sword about his neck, and low shoes of leather upon his feet. And he came and stood before Arthur. "Hail to thee, lord," said he. "Heaven prosper thee," he answered, "and be thou welcome." "Dost thou bring any new tidings?" "I do, lord," he said. "I am one of thy foresters, lord, in the forest of Dean. In the forest I saw a stag, the like of which beheld I never yet." "What is there about him," asked Arthur, "that thou never yet didst see his like?" "He is of pure white, lord, and he does not herd with any other animal, through stateliness and pride, so royal is his bearing. And I come to seek thy counsel, lord, and to know thy will concerning him." "It seems best to me," said Arthur, "to go and hunt him to-morrow at break of day, and to cause general notice thereof to be given to-night, in all quarters of the court."

"For Arthur on the Whitsuntide before
Held court at old Caerleon upon Usk.
There on a day, he sitting high in hall,
Before him came a forester of Dean,
Wet from the woods, with notice of a hart
Taller than all his fellows, milky-white,
First seen that day: these things he told the king.
Then the good king gave order to let blow
His horns for hunting on the morrow morn."—ENID.

And all received notice; and thus it was arranged.

Then Guinevere said to Arthur, "Wilt thou permit me, lord, to go to-morrow to see and hear the hunt of the stag of which the young man spoke?" "I will gladly," said Arthur. And Gawain said to Arthur, "Lord, if it seems well to thee, permit that into whose hunt soever the stag shall come, that one, be he a knight or one on foot, may cut off his head, and give it to whom he pleases, whether to his own lady-love, or to the lady of his friend." "I grant it gladly," said Arthur, "and let the steward of the household be chastised if all things are not ready to-morrow for the chase."

And they passed the night with songs, and diversions, and discourse, and ample entertainment. And when it was time for them all to go to sleep, they went. And when the next day came, they arose. And Arthur called the attendants who guarded his couch. And these men came to Arthur and saluted him, and

arrayed him in his garments. And Arthur wondered that Guinevere did not awake, and the attendants wished to awaken her. "Disturb her not," said Arthur, "for she had rather sleep than go to see the hunting."

Then Arthur went forth, and he heard two horns sounding, one from near the lodging of the chief huntsman, and the other from near that of the chief page. And the whole assembly of the multitudes came to Arthur, and they took the road to the forest.

And after Arthur had gone forth from the palace, Guinevere awoke, and called to her maidens, and apparelled herself. "Maidens," said she, "I had leave last night to go and see the hunt. Go one of you to the stable, and order hither a horse such as a woman may ride." And one of them went, and she found but two horses in the stable; and Guinevere and one of her maidens mounted them, and went through the Usk, and followed the track of the men and the horses. And as they rode thus they heard a loud and rushing sound; and they looked behind them, and beheld a knight upon a hunter foal of mighty size. And the rider was a fair-haired youth, bare-legged, and of princely mien; and a golden hilted sword was at his side, and a robe and a surcoat of satin were upon him, and two low shoes of leather upon his feet; and around him was a scarf of blue purple, at each corner of which was a golden apple.

"For Prince Geraint,
Late also, wearing neither hunting-dress
Nor weapon, save a golden-hilted brand,
Came quickly flashing through the shallow ford."—ENID.

And his horse stepped stately, and swift, and proud; and he overtook Guinevere, and saluted her. "Heaven prosper thee, Geraint," said she; "and why didst thou not go with thy lord to hunt?" "Because I knew not when he went," said he. "I marvel too," said she, "how he could go unknown to me. But thou, O young man, art the most agreeable companion I could have in the whole kingdom; and it may be I shall be more amused with the hunting than they; for we shall hear the horns when they sound, and we shall hear the dogs when they let loose and begin to cry."

The Dwarf's Assault.

So they went to the edge of the forest, and there they stood. "From this place," said she, "we shall hear when the dogs are let loose." And thereupon they heard a loud noise; and they looked toward the spot whence it came, and they beheld a dwarf riding upon a horse, stately and foaming and prancing and strong aud spirited. And in the hand of the dwarf was a whip. And near the dwarf they saw a lady upon a beautiful white horse, of steady and stately pace; and she was clothed in a garment of gold brocade. And near her was a knight upon a war-horse of large size, with heavy and bright armor both upon himself and upon his horse. And truly they never before saw a knight, or a horse, or armor, of such remarkable size.

"Geraint," said Guinevere, "knowest thou the name of that tall knight yonder?" "I know him not," said he, "and the strange armor that he wears prevents my either seeing his face or his features." "Go, maiden," said Guinevere, "and ask the dwarf who that knight is." Then the maiden went up to the dwarf; and she inquired of the dwarf who the knight was. "I will not tell thee," he answered. "Since thou art so churlish," said she, "I will ask him, himself." "Thou shalt not ask him, by my faith," said he. "Wherefore not?" said she. "Because thou art not of honor sufficient to befit thee to speak to my lord." Then the maiden turned her horse's head towards the knight, upon which the dwarf struck her with the whip that was in his hand across the face and the eyes, so that the blood flowed forth. And the maiden returned to Guinevere, complaining of the hurt she had received. "Very rudely has the dwarf treated thee," said Geraint, and he put his hand upon the hilt of his sword. But he took counsel with himself, and considered that it would be no vengeance for him to slay the dwarf, and to be attacked unarmed by the armed knight. So he refrained.

"But I will follow him," said he;

> "I will avenge this insult, noble que n,
> Done in your maiden's person to yourself:
> And I will track this vermin to their earths:
> For tho' I ride unarm'd, I do not doubt
> To find, at some place I shall come at, arms
> On loan, or else for pledge; and, being found,
> Then will I fight him, and will break his pride.

> And on the third day, will again be here,
> So that I be not fall'n in fight. Farewell." —ENID.

"Go," said she, "and do not attack him until thou hast good arms; and I shall be very anxious concerning thee until I hear tidings of thee." "If I am alive," said he, "thou shalt hear tidings of me by to-morrow afternoon;" and with that he departed.

And the road they took was below the palace of Caerleon, and across the ford of the Usk; and they went along a fair and even and lofty ridge of ground, until they came to a town, and at the extremity of the town they saw a fortress and a castle. And as the knight passed through the town, all the people arose and saluted him, and bade him welcome. And when Geraint came into the town, he looked at every house to see if he knew any of those whom he saw. But he knew none, and none knew him, to do him the kindness to let him have arms, either as a loan or for a pledge. And every house he saw was full of men, and arms, and horses. And they were polishing shields, and burnishing swords, and washing armor, and shoeing horses. And the knight and the lady and the dwarf rode up to the castle, that was in the town, and every one was glad in the castle. And from the battlements and the gates they risked their necks, through their eagerness to greet them, and to show their joy.

Geraint stood there, to see whether the knight would remain in the castle; and when he was certain that he would do so, he looked around him. And at a little distance from the town he saw an old palace in ruins, wherein was a hall that was falling to decay.

> "And high above a piece of turret-stair,
> Worn by the feet that now were silent, wound
> Bare to the sun."—ENID.

And as he knew not any one in the town, he went towards the old palace. And when he came near to the palace, he saw a hoary-headed man, standing by it, in tattered garments. And Geraint gazed steadfastly upon him. Then the hoary-headed man said to him, "Young man, wherefore art thou thoughtful?" "I am thoughtful," said he, "because I know not where to pass the night."

"Enter therefore and partake
The slender entertainment of a house
Once rich, now poor, but ever open-door'd."—ENID.

So Geraint went forward. And the hoary-headed man led the way into the hall. And in the hall he dismounted, and he left there his horse. Then he went on up to the chamber with the hoary-headed man. And in the chamber he beheld an old woman, sitting on a cushion, with old, worn-out garments upon her; yet it seemed to him that she must have been comely when in the bloom of youth. And beside her was a maiden, upon whom were a vest and a veil that were old, and beginning to be worn out. And truly he never saw a maiden more full of comeliness and grace and beauty than she. And the hoary-headed man said to the maiden, "There is no attendant for the horse of this youth but thyself." "I will render the best service I am able," said she, "both to him and to his horse." And the maiden disarrayed the youth, and then she furnished his horse with straw and with corn; and then she returned to the chamber.

"And while he waited in the castle-court,
The voice of Enid, Yniol's daughter, rang
Clear thro' the open casement of the hall,
Singing; and as the sweet voice of a bird,
Heard by the lander in a lonely isle,
Moves him to think what kind of bird it is.

"It chanced the song that Enid sang was one
Of Fortune and her wheel, and Enid sang:

"'Turn, Fortune, turn thy wheel and lower the proud;
Turn thy wild wheel thro' sunshine, storm, and cloud;
Thy wheel and thee we neither love nor hate.

"'Smile and we smile, the lords of many lands;
Frown and we smile, the lords of our own hands;
For man is man, and master of his fate.

"'Turn, turn thy wheel above the staring crowd;
Thy wheel and thou are shadows in the cloud;
Thy wheel and thee we neither love nor hate.'

"'There is the nightingale.'
So fared it with Geraint, who thought and said,
'Here, by God's grace, is the one voice for me.'"—ENID.

And the hoary-headed man said to the maiden, "Go to the town, and bring hither the best that thou canst find, both of food and of liquor." "I will gladly, lord," said she. And to the town went the maiden. And they conversed together while the maiden was at the town. And, behold, the maiden came back, and a youth with her, bearing on his back a costrel full of good purchased mead, and a quarter of a young bullock. And in the hands of the maiden was a quantity of white bread, and she had some manchet bread in her veil, and she came into the chamber. "I could not obtain better than this," said she, "nor with better should I have been trusted." "It is good enough," said Geraint. And they caused the meat to be boiled; and when their food was ready, they sat down. And it was in this wise. Geraint sat between the hoary-headed man and his wife, and the maiden served them. And they ate and drank.

And when they had finished eating, Geraint talked with the hoary-headed man, and he asked him in the first place to whom belonged the palace that he was in. "Truly," said he, "it was I that built it, and to me also belonged the city and the castle which thou sawest." "Alas!" said Geraint, "how is it that thou hast lost them now?" "I lost a great earldom as well as these," said he, "and this is how I lost them. I had a nephew, the son of my brother, and I took care of his possessions; but he was impatient to enter upon them, so he made war upon me, and wrested from me not only his own, but also my estates, except this castle." "Good sir," said Geraint, "wilt thou tell me wherefore came the knight and the lady and the dwarf just now into the town, and what is the preparation which I saw, and the putting of arms in order?" "I will do so," said he. "The preparations are for the game that is to be held to-morrow by the young earl, which will be on this wise. In the midst of a meadow which is here, two forks will be set up, and upon the two forks a silver rod, and upon the silver rod a sparrow-hawk, and for the sparrow-hawk there will be a tournament. And to the tournament will go all the array thou didst see in the city, of men and of horses and of arms. And with each man will go the lady he loves best; and no man can just for the sparrow-hawk except the lady he loves best be with him. And the knight that thou sawest has gained the sparrow-hawk

these two years; and if he gains it the third year, he will be called the Knight of the Sparrow-hawk from that time forth."

The Knight of the Sparrow-Hawk.

"Sir," said Geraint, "what is thy counsel to me concerning this knight, on account of the insult which the maiden of Guinevere received from the dwarf?" And Geraint told the hoary-headed man what the insult was that the maiden had received. "It is not easy to counsel thee, inasmuch as thou hast neither dame nor maiden belonging to thee, for whom thou canst just. Yet I have arms here, which thou couldst have, and there is my horse also, if he seem to thee better than thine own." "Ah, sir," said he, "Heaven reward thee! But my own horse, to which I am accustomed, together with thine arms, will suffice me. And if, when the appointed time shall come to-morrow, thou wilt permit me, sir, to challenge for yonder maiden that is thy daughter, I will engage, if I escape from the tournament, to love the maiden as long as I live." "Gladly will I permit thee," said the hoary-headed man; "and since thou dost thus resolve, it is necessary that thy horse and arms should be ready to-morrow at break of day. For then the Knight of the Sparrow-hawk will make proclamation, and ask the lady he loves best to take the sparrow-hawk; and if any deny it to her, by force will he defend her claim. And therefore," said the hoary-headed man, "it is needful for thee to be there at daybreak, and we three will be with thee." And thus was it settled.

And at night they went to sleep. And before the dawn they arose and arrayed themselves; and by the time that it was day, they were all four in the meadow.

> "And when the pale and bloodless east began
> To quicken to the sun, across, and raised
> Her mother, too, and hand-in-hand they moved
> Down to the meadow where the justs were held."—ENID.

And there was the Knight of the Sparrow-hawk making the proclamation, and asking his lady-love to take the sparrow-hawk. "Take it not," said Geraint, "for here is a maiden who is fairer, and more noble, and more comely, and who has a better claim to it than thou." Then said the knight, "If thou main-

tainest the sparrow-hawk to be due to her, come forward and do battle with me." And Geraint went forward to the top of the meadow, having upon himself and upon his horse armor which was heavy and rusty, and of uncouth shape. Then they encountered each other, and they broke a set of lances; and they broke a second set, and a third:

> "And thrice
> They clash'd together, and thrice they brake their spears.
> Then each, dishorsed and drawing, lash'd at each
> So often and with such blows, that all the crowd
> Wondered."—ENID.

And when the earl and his company saw the Knight of the Sparrow-hawk gaining the mastery, there was shouting and joy and mirth amongst them; and the hoary-headed man and his wife and his daughter were sorrowful. And the hoary-headed man served Geraint with lances as often as he broke them, and the dwarf served the Knight of the Sparrow-hawk. Then the hoary-headed man said to Geraint, "O chieftain, since no other will hold with thee, behold, here is the lance which was in my hand on the day when I received the honor of knighthood, and from that time to this I never broke it, and it has an excellent point." Then Geraint took the lance, thanking the hoary-headed man. And thereupon the dwarf also brought a lance to his lord. "Behold, here is a lance for thee, not less good than his," said the dwarf. "And bethink thee that no knight ever withstood thee so long as this one has done." "I declare to Heaven," said Geraint, "that unless death takes me quickly hence, he shall fare never the better for thy service." And Geraint pricked his horse towards him from afar, and, warning him, he rushed upon him, and gave him a blow so severe, and furious, and fierce upon the face of his shield, that he cleft it in two, and broke his armor, and burst his girths, so that both he and his saddle were borne to the ground over the horse's crupper. And Geraint dismounted quickly. And he was wroth, and he drew his sword, and rushed fiercely upon him. Then the knight also arose, and drew his sword against Geraint. And they fought on foot with their swords until their arms struck sparks of fire like stars from one another; and thus they continued fighting until the blood and sweat obscured the light from their eyes.

At length Geraint called to him all his strength, and struck the knight upon the crown of his head, so that he broke all his head-armor, and cut through all the flesh and the skin, even to the skull, until he wounded the bone.

Then the knight fell upon his knees, and cast his sword from his hand, and besought mercy from Geraint. "Of a truth," said he, "I relinquish my overdaring and my pride, and crave thy mercy; and unless I have time to commit myself to Heaven for my sins, and to talk with a priest, thy mercy will avail me little." "I will grant thee grace upon these conditions," said Geraint:

> "First, thou thyself, thy lady, and thy dwarf,
> Shalt ride to Arthur's court, and being there,
> Crave pardon for that insult done the queen,
> And shalt abide her judgment on it; next,
> Thou shalt give back their earldom to thy kin."—ENID.

"This will I do gladly; and who art thou?" "I am Geraint, the son of Erbin; and declare thou also who thou art." "I am Edeyrn, the son of Nudd." Then he threw himself upon his horse, and went forward to Arthur's court; and the lady he loved best went before him, and the dwarf, with much lamentation.

Then came the young earl and his hosts to Geraint, and saluted him, and bade him to his castle. "I may not go," said Geraint; "but where I was last night, there will I be to-night also." "Since thou wilt none of my inviting, thou shalt have abundance of all that I can command for thee; and I will order ointment for thee, to recover thee from thy fatigues, and from the weariness that is upon thee." "Heaven reward thee," said Geraint, "and I will go to my lodging." And thus went Geraint and Earl Ynywl, and his wife and his daughter. And when they reached the old mansion, the household servants and attendants of the young earl had arrived, and had arranged all the apartments, dressing them with straw and with fire; and in a short time the ointment was ready, and Geraint came there, and they washed his head. Then came the young earl with forty honorable knights from among his attendants, and those who were bidden to the tournament. And Geraint came from the anointing. And the earl asked him to go to the hall to eat

"Where is the Earl Ynywl," said Geraint, "and his wife and his daughter?" "They are in the chamber yonder," said the earl's chamberlain, "arraying themselves in garments which the earl has caused to be brought for them." "Let not the damsel array herself," said he, "except in her vest and her veil, until she come to the court of Arthur, to be clad by Guinevere in such garments as she may choose." So the maiden did not array herself.

Then they all entered the hall, and they washed and sat down to meat. And thus were they seated. On one side of Geraint sat the young earl, and Earl Ynywl beyond him, and on the other side of Geraint was the maiden and her mother. And after these all sat according to their precedence in honor. And they ate. And they were served abundantly, and they received a profusion of divers kinds of gifts. Then they conversed together. And the young earl invited Geraint to visit him next day. "I will not," said Geraint. "To the court of Arthur will I go with this maiden to-morrow. And it is enough for me, as long as Earl Ynywl is in poverty and trouble; and I go chiefly to seek to add to his maintenance. I but ask thee," said Geraint, "to restore to him what is his, and what he should have received from the time he lost his possessions even until this day." "That will I do, gladly, for thee," answered he. "Then," said Geraint, "whosoever is here who owes homage to Ynywl, let him come forward, and perform it on the spot." And all the men did so; and by that treaty they abided. And his castle and his town, and all his possessions were restored to Ynywl. And he received back all that he had lost, even to the smallest jewel.

Then spoke Earl Ynywl to Geraint. "Chieftain," said he, "behold the maiden for whom thou didst challenge at the tournament; I bestow her upon thee." "She shall go with me," said Geraint, "to the court of Arthur, and Arthur and Guinevere shall dispose of her as they will." And the next day they proceeded to Arthur's court.

CHAPTER VI.

Ge'raint, the Son of Erbin (Continued).

Now this is how Arthur hunted the stag. The men and the dogs were divided into hunting-parties, and the dogs were let loose upon the stag. And the last dog that was let loose was the favorite dog of Arthur; Cavall was his name. And he left all the other dogs behind him, and turned the stag. And at the second turn the stag came toward the hunting-party of Arthur. And Arthur set upon him; and before he could be slain by any other, Arthur cut off his head. Then they sounded the death-horn for slaying, and they all gathered round.

Then came Kadyriath to Arthur, and spoke to him. "Lord," said he, "behold, yonder is Guinevere, and none with her save only one maiden." "Command Gildas, the son of Caw, and all the scholars of the court," said Arthur, "to attend Guinevere to the palace." And they did so.

Then they all set forth, holding converse together concerning the head of the stag, to whom it should be given. One wished that it should be given to the lady best beloved by him, and another to the lady whom he loved best. And so they came to the palace. And when Arthur and Guinevere heard them disputing about the head of the stag, Guinevere said to Arthur: "My lord, this is my counsel concerning the stag's head; let it not be given away until Geraint, the son of Erbin, shall return from the errand he is upon." And Guinevere told Arthur what that errand was. "Right gladly shall it be so," said Arthur.

And Guinevere caused a watch to be set upon the ramparts for Geraint's coming. And after midday they beheld an unshapely little man upon a horse, and after him a dame or a damsel, also on horseback, and after her a knight of large stature, bowed down, and hanging his head low and sorrowfully, and clad in broken and worthless armor.

And before they came near to the gate, one of the watch went to Guinevere, and told her what kind of people they saw, and what aspect they bore. "I know not who they are," said he. "But *I* know," said Guinevere; "this is the knight whom Geraint pursued, and methinks that he comes not here by his own free will. But Geraint has overtaken him, and avenged the insult to the maiden to the uttermost." And thereupon, behold, a porter came to the spot where Guinevere was. "Lady," said he, "at the gate there is a knight, and I saw never a man of so pitiful an aspect to look upon as he. Miserable and broken is the armor that he wears, and the hue of blood is more conspicuous upon it than its own color." "Knowest thou his name?" said she. "I do," said he; "he tells me that he is Edeyrn, the son of Nudd." Then she replied, "I know him not."

So Guinevere went to the gate to meet him, and he entered. And Guinevere was sorry when she saw the condition he was in, even though he was accompanied by the churlish dwarf. Then Edeyrn saluted Guinevere. "Heaven protect thee," said she. "Lady," said he, "Geraint, the son of Erbin, thy best and most valiant servant, greets thee." "Did he meet with thee?" she asked. "Yes," said he, "and it was not to my advantage; and that was not his fault, but mine, lady. And Geraint greets thee well; and in greeting thee he compelled me to come hither to do thy pleasure for the insult which thy maiden received from the dwarf." "Now where did he overtake thee?" "At the place where we were justing and contending for the sparrow-hawk, in the town which is now called Cardiff. And it was for the avouchment of the love of the maiden, the daughter of Earl Ynywl, that Geraint justed at the tournament. And thereupon we encountered each other, and he left me, lady, as thou seest." "Sir," said she, "when thinkest thou that Geraint will be here?" "To-morrow, lady, I think he will be here with the maiden."

Then Arthur came to them. And he saluted Arthur, and Arthur gazed a long time upon him, and was amazed to see him thus. And thinking that he knew him, he inquired of him, "Art thou Edeyrn, the son of Nudd?" "I am, lord," said he, "and I have met with much trouble and received wounds unsupportable." Then he told Arthur all his adventure. "Well," said Arthur, "from what I hear, it behooves Guinevere to be merciful towards thee." "The mercy which thou desirest, lord," said she, "will I grant to him, since it is as insulting to thee that an insult should be offered to me as to thyself." "Thus will it be best to do," said Arthur; "let this man have medical care until it be known whether he may live. And if he live, he shall do such satisfaction as shall be judged best by the men of the court. And if he die, too much will be the death of such a youth as Edeyrn for an insult to a maiden." "This pleases me," said Guinevere. And Arthur caused Morgan Tud to be called to him. He was the chief physician. "Take with thee Edeyrn, the son of Nudd, and cause a chamber to be prepared for him, and let him have the aid of medicine as thou wouldest do unto myself, if I were wounded; and let none into his chamber to molest him, but thyself and thy disciples, to administer to him remedies." "I will do so gladly, lord," said Morgan Tud. Then said the steward of the household, "Whither is it right, lord, to order the maiden?" "To Guinevere and her handmaidens," said he. And the steward of the household so ordered her.

> "And rising up, he rode to Arthur's court,
> And there the queen forgave him easily.
> And being young, he changed himself, and grew
> To hate the sin that seem'd so like his own
> Of Modred, Arthur's nephew, and fell at last
> In the great battle fighting for the king."—ENID.

The next day came Geraint towards the court; and there was a watch set on the ramparts by Guinevere, lest he should arrive unawares. And one of the watch came to Guinevere. "Lady," said he, "methinks that I see Geraint, and a maiden with him. He is on horseback, but he has his walking gear upon him, and the maiden appears to be in white, seeming to be clad in a garment of linen." "Assemble all the women," said Guinevere, "and

come to meet Geraint, to welcome him, and wish him joy." And Guinevere went to meet Geraint and the maiden. And when Geraint came to the place where Guinevere was, he saluted her. "Heaven prosper thee," said she, "and welcome to thee." "Lady," said he, "I earnestly desired to obtain thee satisfaction, according to thy will; and, behold, here is the maiden through whom thou hadst thy revenge." "Verily," said Guinevere, "the welcome of Heaven be unto her; and it is fitting that we should receive her joyfully." Then they went in and dismounted. And Geraint came to where Arthur was, and saluted him. "Heaven protect thee," said Arthur, "and the welcome of Heaven be unto thee. And inasmuch as thou hast vanquished Edeyrn, the son of Nudd, thou hast had a prosperous career." "Not upon me be the blame," said Geraint; "it was through the arrogance of Edeyrn, the son of Nudd, himself, that we were not friends." "Now," said Arthur, "where is the maiden for whom I heard thou didst give challenge?" "She is gone with Guinevere to her chamber." Then went Arthur to see the maiden. And Arthur, and all his companions, and his whole court, were glad concerning the maiden. And certain were they all, that, had her array been suitable to her beauty, they had never seen a maid fairer than she. And Arthur gave away the maiden to Geraint. And the usual bond made between two persons was made between Geraint and the maiden, and the choicest of all Guinevere's apparel was given to the maiden; and thus arrayed, she appeared comely and graceful to all who beheld her. And that day and the night were spent in abundance of minstrelsy, and ample gifts of liquor, and a multitude of games. And when it was time for them to go to sleep, they went. And in the chamber where the couch of Arthur and Guinevere was, the couch of Geraint and Enid was prepared. And from that time she became his wife. And the next day Arthur satisfied all the claimants upon Geraint with bountiful gifts.

"Now thrice that morning Guinevere had climb'd
The giant tower, from whose high crest, they say,
Men saw the goodly hills of Somerset,
And white sails flying on the yellow sea;
But not to goodly hill or yellow sea
Look'd the fair queen, but up the vale of Usk.

By the flat meadow, till she saw them come;
And then descending met them at the gates,
Embraced her with all welcome as a friend,
And did her honor as the prince's bride,
And clothed her for her bridals like the sun;
And all that week was old Caerleon gay,
For by the hands of Dubric, the high saint,
They twain were wedded with all ceremony."—ENID.

And the maiden took up her abode in the palace, and she had many companions, both men and women, and there was no maiden more esteemed than she in the island of Britain.

Then spake Guinevere. "Rightly did I judge," said she, "concerning the head of the stag, that it should not be given to any until Geraint's return; and behold, here is a fit occasion for bestowing it. Let it be given to Enid, the daughter of Ynywl, the most illustrious maiden. And I do not believe that any will begrudge it her, for between her and every one here there exists nothing but love and friendship." Much applauded was this by them all, and by Arthur also. And the head of the stag was given to Enid. And thereupon her fame increased, and her friends became more in number than before. And Geraint from that time forth loved the hunt, and the tournament, and hard encounters; and he came victorious from them all. And a year, and a second, and a third, he proceeded thus, until his fame had flown over the face of the kingdom.

And, once upon a time, Arthur was holding his court at Caerleon upon Usk; and behold, there came to him ambassadors, wise and prudent, full of knowledge and eloquent of speech, and they saluted Arthur. "Heaven prosper you!" said Arthur, "and whence do you come?" "We come, lord," said they, "from Cornwall; and we are ambassadors from Erbin, the son of Custennin, thy uncle, and our mission is unto thee. And he greets thee well, as an uncle should greet his nephew, and as a vassal should greet his lord. And he represents unto thee that he waxes heavy and feeble, and is advancing in years. And the neighboring chiefs, knowing this, grow insolent towards him, and covet his land and possessions. And he earnestly beseeches thee, lord, to permit Geraint his son to return to him, to protect his possessions, and to become acquainted with his boundaries. And unto him he represents that it were better for him to spend

the flower of his youth and the prime of his age in preserving his own boundaries, than in tournaments which are productive of no profit, although he obtains glory in them."

"Well," said Arthur, "go and divest yourselves of your accoutrements, and take food, and refresh yourselves after your fatigues; and before you go from hence you shall have an answer." And they went to eat. And Arthur considered that it would go hard with him to let Geraint depart from him, and from his court; neither did he think it fair that his cousin should be restrained from going to protect his dominions and his boundaries, seeing that his father was unable to do so. No less was the grief and regret of Guinevere, and all her women, and all her damsels, through fear that the maiden would leave them. And that day and that night were spent in abundance of feasting. And Arthur told Geraint the cause of the mission, and of the coming of the ambassadors to him out of Cornwall. "Truly," said Geraint, "be it to my advantage or disadvantage, lord, I will do according to thy will concerning this embassy. "Behold," said Arthur, "though it grieves me to part with thee, it is my counsel that thou go to dwell in thine own dominions, and to defend thy boundaries, and take with thee to accompany thee as many as thou wilt of those thou lovest best among my faithful ones, and among thy friends, and among thy companions in arms." "Heaven reward thee! and this will I do," said Geraint. "What discourse," said Guinevere, "do I hear between you? Is it of those who are to conduct Geraint to his country?" "It is," said Arthur. "Then is it needful for me to consider," said she, "concerning companions and a provision for the lady that is with me." "Thou wilt do well," said Arthur.

And that night they went to sleep. And the next day the ambassadors were permitted to depart, and they were told that Geraint should follow them. And on the third day Geraint set forth, and many went with him,—Gawain, the son of Gwyar, and Riogoned, the son of the king of Ireland, and Ondyaw, the son of the Duke of Burgundy, Gwilim, the son of the ruler of the Franks, Howel, the son of the Earl of Brittany, Perceval, the son of Evrawk, Gwyr, a judge in the court of Arthur, Bedwyr, the son of Bedrawd, Kai, the son of Kyner, Odyar, the

Frank, and Edeyrn, the son of Nudd. Said Geraint, "I think I shall have enough of knighthood with me." And they set forth. And never was there seen a fairer host journeying towards the Severn.

> "He made this pretext, that his princedom lay
> Close on the borders of a territory
> Wherein were bandit earls, and caitiff knights,
> Assassins, and all flyers from the hand
> Of justice, and whatever loathes a law;
> And therefore, till the king himself should please
> To cleanse this common sewer of all his realm,
> He craved a fair permission to depart,
> And there defend his marches; and the king
> Mused for a little on his plea, but, last,
> Allowing it, the prince and Enid rode,
> And fifty knights rode with them, to the shores
> Of Severn."—ENID.

And on the other side of the Severn were the nobles of Erbin, the son of Custennin, and his foster-father at the head, to welcome Geraint with gladness; and many of the women of the court, with his mother to receive Enid, the daughter of Ynywl, his wife. And there was great rejoicing and gladness throughout the whole court, and through all the country, concerning Geraint, because of the greatness of their love to him, and of the greatness of the fame which he had gained since he went from amongst them, and because he was come to take possession of his dominions, and to preserve his boundaries. And they came to the court. And in the court they had ample entertainment, and a multitude of gifts, and abundance of liquor, and a sufficiency of service, and a variety of games. And to do honor to Geraint, all the chief men of the country were invited that night to visit him. And they passed that day and that night in the utmost enjoyment. And at dawn next day Erbin arose, and summoned to him Geraint, and the noble persons who had borne him company. And he said to Geraint: "I am a feeble and an aged man, and whilst I was able to maintain the dominion for thee and for myself I did so. But thou art young, and in the flower of thy vigor and of thy youth. Henceforth do thou preserve thy possessions." "Truly," said Geraint, "with my consent thou shalt not give the power over thy do-

minions at this time into my hands, and thou shalt not take me from Arthur's court." "Into thy hands will I give them," said Erbin, "and this day also shalt thou receive the homage of thy subjects."

Then said Gawain, "It were better for thee to satisfy those who have boons to ask, to-day, and to-morrow thou canst receive the homage of thy dominions." So all that had boons to ask were summoned into one place. And Kadyrieth came to them to know what were their requests. And every one asked that which he desired. And the followers of Arthur began to make gifts, and immediately the men of Cornwall came, and gave also. And they were not long in giving, so eager was every one to bestow gifts. And of those who came to ask gifts, none departed unsatisfied. And that day and that night were spent in the utmost enjoyment.

And the next day at dawn, Erbin desired Geraint to send messengers to the men to ask them whether it was displeasing to them that he should come to receive their homage, and whether they had anything to object to him. Then Geraint sent ambassadors to the men of Cornwall to ask them this. And they all said that it would be the fulness of joy and honor to them for Geraint to come and receive their homage. So he received the homage of such as were there. And the day after, the followers of Arthur intended to go away. "It is too soon for you to go away yet," said he; "stay with me until I have finished receiving the homage of my chief men, who have agreed to come to me." And they remained with him until he had done so. Then they set forth towards the court of Arthur. And Geraint went to bear them company, and Enid also, as far as Diganwy; there they parted. And Ondyaw, the son of the Duke of Burgundy, said to Geraint, "Go, now, and visit the uttermost parts of thy dominions, and see well to the boundaries of thy territories; and if thou hast any trouble respecting them, send unto thy companions." "Heaven reward thee!" said Geraint; "and this will I do." And Geraint journeyed to the uttermost parts of his dominions. And experienced guides, and the chief men of his country, went with him. And the furthermost point that they showed him he kept possession of.

CHAPTER VII.

Ge'raint and E'nid—The Earl Li'mours—The Earl Doorm.

GERAINT, as he had been used to do when he was at Arthur's court, frequented tournaments. And he became acquainted with valiant and mighty men, until he had gained as much fame there as he had formerly done elsewhere. And he enriched his court, and his companions, and his nobles, with the best horses and the best arms, and with the best and most valuable jewels, and he ceased not until his fame had flown over the face of the whole kingdom.

> "Before Geraint, the scourge of the enemy,
> I saw steeds white with foam,
> And after the shout of battle a fearful torrent."—HEN.

When he knew that it was thus, he began to love ease and pleasure, for there was no one who was worth his opposing. And he loved his wife, and liked to continue in the palace, with minstrelsy and diversions. So he began to shut himself up in the chamber of his wife, and he took no delight in anything besides, insomuch that he gave up the friendship of his nobles, together with his hunting and his amusements, and lost the hearts of all the host in his court. And there was murmuring and scoffing concerning him among the inhabitants of the palace, on account of his relinquishing so completely their companionship for the love of his wife.

> "They
> Began to scoff and jeer and babble of him
> As of a prince whose manhood was all gone,
> And molten down in mere uxoriousness."—ENID.

These tidings came to Erbin. And when Erbin had heard these things, he spoke unto Enid, and inquired of her whether it was she that had caused Geraint to act thus, and to forsake his people and his hosts. "Not I, by my confession unto Heaven," said she; "there is nothing more hateful unto me than this." And she knew not what she should do, for, although it was hard for her to own this to Geraint, yet was it not more easy for her to listen to what she heard, without warning Geraint concerning it. And she was very sorrowful.

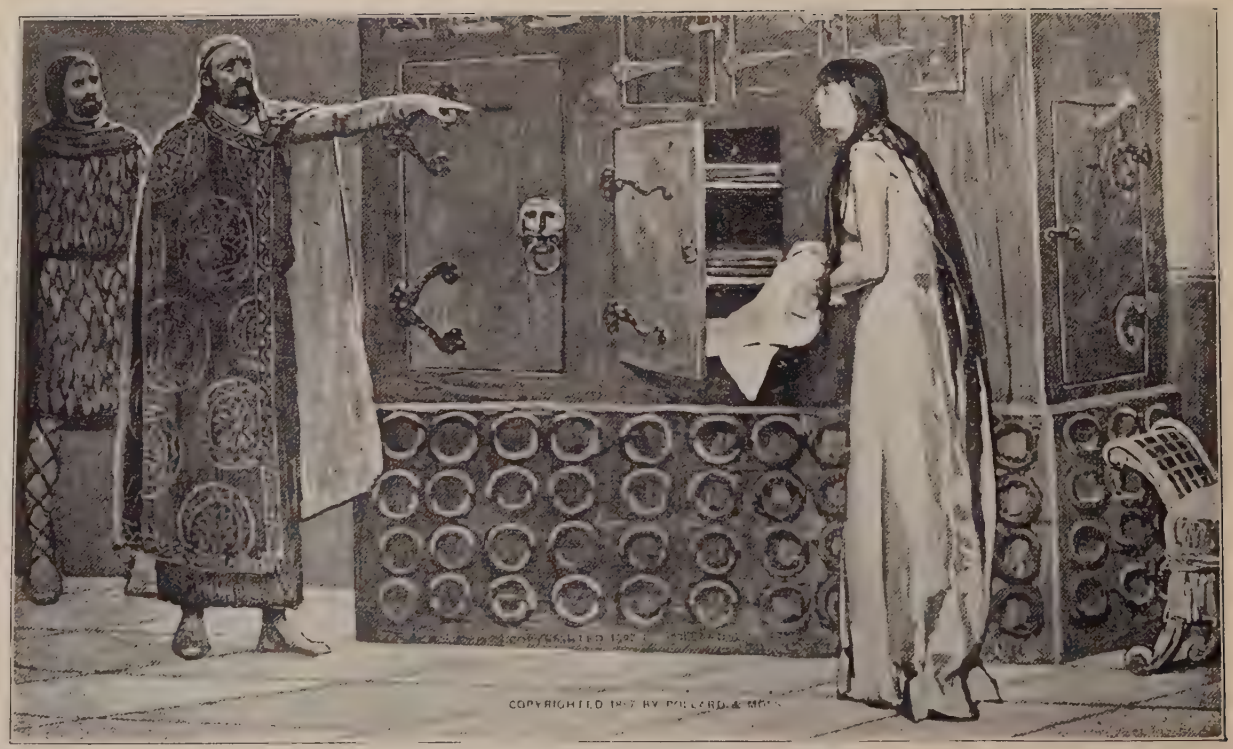
One morning in the summer-time they were upon their couch, and Geraint lay upon the edge of it. And Enid was without sleep in the apartment, which had windows of glass; and the sun shone upon the couch. And the clothes had slipped from off his arms and his breast, and he was asleep. Then she gazed upon the marvellous beauty of his appearance, and she said,

> "O noble breast and all-puissant arms,
> Am I the cause, I the poor cause that men
> Reproach you, saying all your force is gone?
> I *am* the cause because I dare not speak
> And tell him what I think and what they say.
> And yet I hate that he should linger here;
> I cannot love my lord and not his name.
> Far liever had I gird his harness on him,
> And ride with him to battle."—ENID.

As she said this the tears dropped from her eyes, and they fell upon his breast. And the tears she shed, and the words she had spoken, awoke him. And another thing contributed to awaken him, and that was the idea that it was not in thinking of him that she spoke thus, but that it was because she loved some other man more than him, and that she wished for other society. Thereupon Geraint was troubled in his mind,

> "And shook his drowsy squire awake and cried
> 'My charger and her palfrey,' then to her,
> 'I will ride forth into the wilderness;
> For tho' it seems my spurs are yet to win,
> I have not fall'n so low as some would wish.
> And you, put on your worst and meanest dress
> And ride with me.' And Enid ask'd, amazed,
> 'If Enid errs, let Enid learn her fault.'"—ENID.

So she arose, and clothed herself in her meanest garments.



The Cedar Cabinet.

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"Then she bethought her of a faded silk,
A faded mantle and a faded veil,
And moving toward a cedarn cabinet,
Wherein she kept them folded reverently
With sprigs of summer laid between the folds,
She took them, and array'd herself therein,
Remembering when first he came on her
Drest in that dress, and how he loved her in it,
And all her foolish fears about the dress,
And all his journey to her, as himself
Had told her, and their coming to the court."—ENID.

"I know nothing, lord," said she, "of thy meaning." "Neither wilt thou know at this time," said he.

Then Geraint went to see Erbin. "Sir," said he, "I am going upon a quest, and I am not certain when I may come back. Take heed, therefore, unto thy possessions until my return." "I will do so," said he; "but it is strange to me that thou shouldst go so suddenly. And who will proceed with thee, since thou art not strong enough to traverse the land of Loegyr alone?" "But one person only will go with me." "Heaven counsel thee, my son," said Erbin, "and may many attach themselves to thee in Loegyr." Then went Geraint to the place where his horse was, and it was equipped with foreign armor, heavy and shining. And he desired Enid to mount her horse, and to ride forward, and to keep a long way before him.

"'I charge you ride before,
Ever a good way on before; and this
I charge you, on your duty as a wife,
Whatever happens, not to speak to me,
No, not a word!' and Enid was aghast."—ENID.

So they set forward. And he did not choose the pleasantest and most frequented road, but that which was the wildest, and most beset by thieves and robbers and venomous animals.

And they came to a high-road, which they followed till they saw a vast forest; and they saw three armed horsemen come forth from the forest. When the armed men saw them, they said one to another, "Here is a good occasion for us to capture two horses and armor, and a lady likewise; for this we shall have no difficulty in doing against yonder single knight, who hangs his head so pensively and heavily." Enid heard this discourse, and she

knew not what she should do through fear of Geraint, who had told her to be silent. "The vengeance of Heaven be upon me," said she, "if I would not rather receive my death from his hand than from the hand of any other; and though he should slay me, yet will I speak to him, lest I should have the misery to witness his death." So she waited for Geraint until he came near to her. "Lord," said she, "didst thou hear the words of those men concerning thee?" Then he lifted up his eyes, and looked at her angrily. "Thou hadst only," said he, "to hold thy peace, as I bade thee. I wish but for silence, and not for warning. And though thou shouldst desire to see my defeat and my death by the hands of those men, yet do I feel no dread."

"Then Enid waited pale and sorrowful,
And down upon him bare the bandit three."—ENID.

Then the foremost of them couched his lance, and rushed upon Geraint. And he received him, and that not feebly. But he let the thrust go by him, while he struck the horseman upon the centre of his shield in such a manner that his shield was split, and his armor broken, so that a cubit's length of the shaft of Geraint's lance passed through his body, and sent him to the earth, the length of the lance over his horse's crupper. Then the second horseman attacked him furiously, being wroth at the death of his companion. But with one thrust Geraint overthrew him also, and killed him as he had done the other. Then the third set upon him, and he killed him in like manner. Sad and sorrowful was the maiden as she saw all this. Geraint dismounted his horse, and took the arms of the men he had slain, and placed them upon their saddles, and tied together the reins of their horses; and he mounted his horse again. "Behold what thou must do," said he; "take the three horses, and drive them before thee, and proceed forward as I bade thee just now. And say not one word unto me, unless I speak first unto thee. And I declare unto Heaven," said he, "if thou doest not thus, it will be to thy cost." "I will do as far as I can, lord," said she, "according to thy desire."

So the maiden went forward, keeping in advance of Geraint, as he had desired her; and it grieved him as much as his wrath would permit to see a maiden so illustrious as she having so much

The Three Bandits.

trouble with the care of the horses. Then they reached a wood, and it was both deep and vast, and in the wood night overtook them. "Ah, maiden," said he, "it is vain to attempt proceeding forward." "Well, lord," said she, "whatever thou wishest, we will do." "It will be best for us," he answered, "to rest and wait for the day, in order to pursue our journey." "That will we, gladly," said she. And they did so. Having dismounted himself, he took her down from her horse. "I cannot by any means refrain from sleep, through weariness," said he; "do thou therefore watch the horses, and sleep not." "I will, lord," said she. Then he went to sleep in his armor, and thus passed the night, which was not long at that season. And when she saw the dawn of day appear, she looked around her to see if he were waking, and thereupon he woke. Then he arose, and said unto her, "Take the horses and ride on, and keep straight on as thou didst yesterday." And they left the wood, and they came to an open country, with meadows on one hand, and mowers mowing the meadows. And there was a river before them, and the horses bent down and drank of the water. And they went up out of the river by a lofty steep; and there they met a slender stripling with a satchel about his neck, and they saw that there was something in the satchel, but they knew not what it was. And he had a small blue pitcher in his hand, and a bowl on the mouth of the pitcher.

> "And down a rocky pathway from the place
> There came a fair-hair'd youth, that in his hand
> Bare victual for the mowers: and Geraint
> Had ruth again on Enid looking pale:
> Then, moving downward to the meadow-ground,
> He, when the fair-hair'd youth came by him, said
> 'Friend, let her eat; the damsel is so faint.'
> 'Yea, willingly,' replied the youth; 'and you
> My lord, eat also, tho' the fare is coarse,
> And only meet for mowers;' then set down
> His basket, and dismounting on the sward
> They let the horses graze, and ate themselves."—ENID.

And when they had finished, the youth arose and said to Geraint, "My lord, with thy permission, I will now go and fetch some food for the mowers." "Go first to the town," said Ge-

raint, "and take a lodging for me in the best place that thou knowest, and the most commodious one for the horses; and take thou whichever horse and arms thou choosest, in payment for thy service and thy gift." "Heaven reward thee, lord!" said the youth; "and this would be ample to repay services much greater than those I have rendered unto thee." And to the town went the youth, and he took the best and the most pleasant lodgings that he knew; and after that he went to the palace, having the horse and armor with him, and proceeded to the place where the earl was, and told him all his adventure. "I go now, lord," said he, "to meet the knight, and to conduct him to his lodging." "Go, gladly," said the earl; "and right joyfully shall he be received here, if he so come." The earl was the great Limours, one of the most terrible knights in the country.

The Earl Li'mours.

And the youth went to meet Geraint, and told him that he would be received gladly by the earl in his own palace; but he would go only to his lodgings. And he had a goodly chamber, in which was plenty of straw and drapery, and a spacious and commodious place he had for the horses; and the youth prepared for them plenty of provender. After they had disarrayed themselves, Geraint spoke thus to Enid: "Go," said he, "to the other side of the chamber, and come not to this side of the house; and thou mayst call to thee the woman of the house, if thou wilt." "I will do, lord," said she, "as thou sayest." Thereupon the man of the house came to Geraint, and welcomed him. And after they had eaten and drank, Geraint went to sleep, and so did Enid also.

In the evening, behold, the earl came to visit Geraint, and his twelve honorable knights with him. And Geraint rose up and welcomed him. Then they all sat down according to their precedence in honor. And the earl conversed with Geraint, and inquired of him the object of his journey. "I have none," he replied, "but to seek adventures and to follow my own inclination." Then the earl cast his eye upon Enid, and he looked at her steadfastly. And he thought he had never seen a maiden fairer or more comely than she. And he set all his thoughts and his affections upon her.

"Then, when the prince was merry, ask'd Limours,
'Your leave, my lord, to cross the room and speak
To your good damsel there, who sits apart,
And seems so lonely.'"—ENID.

"Thou hast it gladly," said he. So the earl went to the place where the maiden was, and spake with her. "Ah! maiden," said he, "it cannot be pleasant to thee to journey with yonder man." "It is not unpleasant to me," said she. "Thou hast neither youths nor maidens to serve thee," said he. "Truly," she replied, "it is more pleasant for me to follow yonder man than to be served by youths and maidens." "I will give thee good counsel," said he: "all my earldom will I place in thy possession, if thou wilt dwell with me."

"Enid, the pilot star of my lone life,
Enid, my early and my only love."—ENID.

"That will I not," she said; "yonder man was the first to whom my faith was ever pledged; and shall I prove inconstant to him?" "Thou art in the wrong," said the earl; "if I slay the man yonder, I can keep thee with me as long as I choose; and when thou no longer pleasest me, I can turn thee away. But if thou goest with me by thy own good-will, I protest that our union shall continue as long as I remain alive." Then she pondered those words of his, and she considered that it was advisable to encourage him in his request. "Behold then, chieftain, this is most expedient for thee to do to save me from all reproach; come here to-morrow and take me away as though I knew nothing thereof." "I will do so," said he. So he arose and took his leave, and went forth with his attendants. And she told not then to Geraint any of the conversation which she had had with the earl, lest it should rouse his anger, and cause him uneasiness and care.

And at the usual hour they went to sleep. And at the beginning of the night Enid slept a little.

"Anon she rose, and stepping lightly, heap'd
The pieces of his armor in one place,
All to be there against a sudden need."—ENID.

And although fearful of her errand, she came to the side of

Geraint's bed; and she spoke to him softly and gently, saying, "My lord, arise, and clothe thyself, for these were the words of the earl to me, and his intention concerning me." So she told Geraint all that had passed. And although he was wroth with her, he took warning and clothed himself. And she lighted a candle that he might have light to do so. "Leave there the candle," said he, "and desire the man of the house to come here." Then she went, and the man of the house came to him. "Dost thou know how much I owe thee?" asked Geraint. "I think thou owest but little." "Take the three horses and the three suits of armor." "Heaven reward thee, lord," said he, "but I spent not the value of one suit of armor upon thee." "For that reason," said he, "thou wilt be the richer. And now, wilt thou come to guide me out of the town?" "I will gladly," said he; "and in which direction dost thou intend to go?" "I wish to leave the town by a different way from that by which I entered it." So the man of the lodgings accompanied him as far as he desired. Then he bade the maiden to go on before him.

"'And to-day
I charge you, Enid, more especially,
What thing soever you may hear, or see,
Or fancy (tho' I count it of small use
To charge you), that you speak not but obey.'"—ENID.

They had not proceeded far when Enid observed a cloud of dust in the distance. She said nothing, but by pointing with her finger attracted Geraint's attention.

"And in the moment after, wild Limours,
Borne on a black horse, like a thunder-cloud
Whose skirts are loosen'd by the breaking storm,
Half ridden off with by the thing he rode,
And all in passion uttering a dry shriek,
Dash'd on Geraint, who closed with him, and bore
Down by the length of lance and arm beyond."—ENID.

Limours had been vanquished, but Geraint had not escaped unharmed. He had been wounded beneath his armor, and, fainting from the loss of blood, fell unconscious to the ground. Piercing and loud and thrilling was the cry that Enid uttered.

"And Enid heard the clashing of his fall,
Suddenly came, and at his side all pale
Dismounting, loosed the fastenings of his arms.
Then after all was done that hand could do,
She rested, and her desolation came
Upon her, and she wept beside the way."—ENID.

And she came and stood over him where he had fallen. While Enid stood weeping over the form of Geraint, her cries attracted the attention of the fierce Earl Doorm, who happened to be journeying that way.

The Earl Doorm.

This was one of the most cruel knights in the entire kingdom, a fit associate for the wretched Limours.

"The huge Earl Doorm,
Broad-faced with under-fringe of russet beard,
Bound on a foray, rolling eyes of prey,
Came riding with a hundred lances up;
But ere he came, like one that hails a ship,
Cried out with a big voice, 'What, is he dead?'
'No, no, not dead!' she answered in all haste.
Then said Earl Doorm: 'Well, if he be not dead,
Why wail you for him thus? you seem a child.
And be he dead, I count you for a fool;
Your wailing will not quicken him: dead or not,
You mar a comely face with idiot tears.
Yet, since the face is comely—some of you,
Here, take him up, and bear him to our hall:
And if he live, we will have him of our band;
And if he die, why earth has earth enough
To hide him. See ye take the charger too,
A noble one.' He spake, and past away,
But left two brawny spearmen, who advanced,
Each growling like a dog."—ENID.

When they arrived at the castle, Geraint was placed upon a little couch in front of the table that was in the hall. Then they all took off their travelling-gear, and the earl besought Enid to do the same, and to clothe herself in other garments. "I will not, by Heaven," said she. "Ah, lady," said he, "be not so sorrowful for this matter." "It were hard to persuade me to be otherwise," said she. "I will act towards thee in such

wise that thou needest not be sorrowful whether yonder knight live or die. Behold, a good earldom, together with myself, will I bestow upon thee; be therefore happy and joyful." "I declare to Heaven," said she, "that henceforth I shall never be joyful while I live." "Come," said he, "and eat."

"Here the huge Earl cried out upon her talk,
As all but empty heart and weariness
And sickly nothing; suddenly seized on her,
And bare her by main violence to the board,
And thrust the dish before her, crying 'Eat.'
'No, no,' said Enid, vext, 'I will not eat,
Till yonder man upon the bier arise,
And eat with me.'"—ENID.

Then he gave her a box on the ear. Thereupon she raised a loud and piercing shriek, and her lamentations were much greater than they had been before; for she considered in her own mind that, had Geraint been alive, he durst not have struck her thus. But behold, at the sound of her cry Geraint revived from his swoon, and he sat up on the bier.

"This heard Geraint, and grasping at his sword,
Made but a single bound, and with a sweep of it,
Shore thro' the swarthy neck, and like a ball
The russet-bearded head roll'd on the floor."—ENID.

Then all left the board and fled away. And this was not so much through fear of the living as through the dread they felt at seeing the dead man rise up to slay them.

And Geraint looked upon Enid, and he was grieved for two causes; one was to see that Enid had lost her color and her wonted aspect; and the other, to know that she was in the right. "Lady," said he, "knowest thou where our horses are?" "I know, lord, where thy horse is," she replied, "but I know not where is the other. Thy horse is in the house yonder." So he went to the house, and brought forth his horse, and mounted him, and took up Enid, and placed her upon the horse with him.

"And he turn'd his face
And kiss'd her climbing, and she cast her arms
About him, and at once they rode away."—ENID.

The Earl of Doorm and Enid.

And their road lay between two hedges; and the night was gaining on the day. And lo! they saw behind them the shafts of spears betwixt them and the sky, and they heard the tramping of horses, and the noise of a host approaching. "I hear something following us," said he, "and I will put thee on the other side of the hedge." And thus he did. And thereupon, behold, a knight pricked towards him, and couched his lance. When Enid saw this, she cried out, saying, "O chieftain, whoever thou art, what renown wilt thou gain by slaying a dead man?" "O Heaven!" said he, "is it Geraint?" "Yes, in truth," said she; "and who art thou?" "I am Gwiffert Petit," said he, "thy husband's ally, coming to thy assistance, for I heard that thou wast in trouble.

> "My lord Geraint, I greet you with all love;
> I took you for a bandit knight of Doorm;
> And fear not, Enid, I should fall upon him,
> Who love you, prince, with something of the love
> Wherewith we love the Heaven that chastens us."—ENID.

Come with me to the court of a son-in-law of my sister, which is near here, and thou shalt have the best medical assistance in the kingdom." "I will do so gladly," said Geraint. And Enid was placed upon the horse of one of Gwiffert's squires, and they went forward to the baron's palace. And they were received there with gladness, and they met with hospitality and attention. The next morning they went to seek physicians; and it was not long before they came, and they attended Geraint until he was perfectly well.

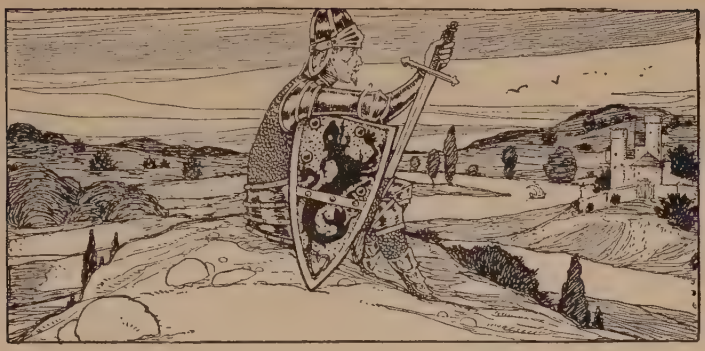
> "Then, when Geraint was whole again, they past
> With Arthur to Caerleon upon Usk.
> There the great queen once more embraced her friend,
> And clothed her in apparel like the day."—ENID.

And while Geraint was under medical care, Gwiffert caused his armor to be repaired, until it was as good as it had ever been. And they remained there a month and a fortnight. Then they separated, and Geraint went towards his own dominions, and thenceforth he reigned prosperously, and his warlike fame and splendor lasted with renown and honor both to him and to Enid, from that time forward.

"They call'd him the great prince and man of men.
But Enid, whom her ladies loved to call
Enid the Fair, a grateful people named
Enid the Good; and in their halls arose
The cry of children, Enids and Geraints
Of times to be; nor did he doubt he. more
But rested in her fealty, till he crown'd
A happy life."—ENID.

Geraint is said to have retained his love for knightood, and finally received a thrust from which he never recovered.

"At Longborth was Geraint slain,
A valiant warrior from the woods of Doorm,
Slaughtering his enemies as he fell."—TRIAD HEN.



CHAPTER VIII.

Pwyll (Pool), Prince of Dy'ved.

Once upon a time Pwyll was at Narberth, his chief palace, where a feast had been prepared for him, and with him was a great host of men. And after the first meal Pwyll arose to walk; and he went to the top of the mound that was above the palace, and was called Gorsedd Arberth. "Lord," said one of the court, "it is peculiar to the mound that whosoever sits upon it cannot go thence without either receiving wounds or blows, or else seeing a wonder." "I fear not to receive wounds or blows," said Pwyll; "but as to the wonder, gladly would I see it. I will therefore go and sit upon the mound."

And upon the mound he sat. And while he sat there, they saw a lady, on a pure white horse of large size, with a garment of shining gold around her, coming along the highway that led from the mound. "My men," said Pwyll, "is there any among you who knows yonder lady?" "There is not, lord," said they. "Go one of you and meet her, that we may know who she is." And one of them arose, and as he came upon the road to meet her, she passed by; and he followed as fast as he could, being on foot, and the greater was his speed, the further was she from him. And when he saw that it profited him nothing to follow her, he returned to Pwyll, and said unto him, "Lord, it is idle for any one in the world to follow her on foot." "Verily," said Pwyll, "go unto the palace, and take the fleetest horse that thou seest, and go after her."

And he took a horse and went forward. And he came to an open, level plain, and put spurs to his horse; and the more he urged his horse, the further she was from him. And he returned to the place where Pwyll was, and said, "Lord, it will avail nothing for any one to follow yonder lady. I know of no horse in these realms swifter than this, and it availed me not to pursue her." "Of a truth," said Pwyll, "there must be some illusion here; let us go towards the palace." So to the palace they went and spent the day.

And the next day they amused themselves until it was time to go to meat. And when meat was ended, Pwyll said, "Where are the hosts that went yesterday to the top of the mound?" "Behold, lord, we are here," said they. "Let us go," said he, "to the mound, and sit there. And do thou," said he to the page who tended his horse, "saddle my horse well, and hasten with him to the road, and bring also my spurs with thee." And the youth did thus. And they went and sat upon the mound; and ere they had been there but a short time they beheld the lady coming by the same road, and in the same manner, and at the same pace. "Young man," said Pwyll, "I see the lady coming; give me my horse." And before he had mounted his horse she passed him. And he turned after her and followed her. And he let his horse go bounding playfully, and thought that he should soon come up with her. But he came no nearer to her than at first. Then he urged his horse to his utmost speed, yet he found that it availed not. Then said Pwyll, "O maiden, for the sake of him whom thou best lovest, stay for me." "I will stay gladly," said she; "and it were better for thy horse hadst thou asked it long since." So the maiden stopped; and she threw back that part of her headdress which covered her face. Then he thought that the beauty of all the maidens and all the ladies that he had ever seen was as nothing compared to her beauty. "Lady," he said, "wilt thou tell me aught concerning thy purpose?" "I will tell thee," said she; "my chief quest was to see thee." "Truly," said Pwyll, "this is to me the most pleasing quest on which thou couldst have come; and wilt thou tell me who thou art?" "I will tell thee, lord," said she. "I am Rhiannon, the daughter of Heveydd, and they sought to give me to a husband against my

will. But no husband would I have, and that because of my love for thee; neither will I yet have one, unless thou reject me; and hither have I come to hear thy answer." "By Heaven," said Pwyll, "behold this is my answer. If I might choose among all the ladies and damsels in the world, thee would I choose." "Verily," said she, "if thou art thus minded, make a pledge to me ere I am given to another." "The sooner I may do so, the more pleasing will it be to me," said Pwyll; "and wheresoever thou wilt, there will I meet with thee." "I will that thou meet me this day twelvemonth at the palace of Heveydd." "Gladly," said he, "will I keep this tryst." So they parted, and he went back to his hosts, and to them of his household. And whatsoever questions they asked him respecting the damsel, he always turned the discourse upon other matters.

And when a year from that time was gone, he caused a hundred knights to equip themselves, and to go with him to the palace of Heveydd. And he came to the palace, and there was great joy concerning him, with much concourse of people, and great rejoicing, and vast preparations for his coming. And the whole court was placed under his orders.

And the hall was garnished, and they went to meat, and thus did they sit: Heveydd was on one side of Pwyll, and Rhiannon on the other; and all the rest according to their rank. And they ate and feasted, and talked one with another. And at the beginning of the carousal, after the meat, there entered a tall, auburn-haired youth, of royal bearing, clothed in a garment of satin. And when he came into the hall he saluted Pwyll and his companions. "The greeting of Heaven be unto thee," said Pwyll; "come thou and sit down." "Nay," said he, "a suitor am I, and I will do my errand." "Do so, willingly," said Pwyll. "Lord," said he, "my errand is unto thee, and it is to crave a boon of thee that I come." "What boon soever thou mayest ask of me, so far as I am able, thou shalt have." "Ah!" said Rhiannon, "wherefore didst thou give that answer?" "Has he not given it before the presence of these nobles?" asked the youth. "My soul," said Pwyll, "what is the boon thou askest?" "The lady whom best I love is to be thy bride this night; I come to ask her of thee, with the feast and the banquet that are in this place." And Pwyll was

silent, because of the promise which he had given. "Be silent as long as thou wilt," said Rhiannon; "never did man make worse use of his wits than thou hast done." "Lady," said he, "I knew not who he was." "Behold, this is the man to whom they would have given me against my will," said she; "and he is Gawl, the son of Clud, a man of great power and wealth, and because of the word thou hast spoken, bestow me upon him, lest shame befall thee." "Lady," said he, "I understand not thy answer; never can I do as thou sayest." "Bestow me upon him," said she, "and I will cause that I shall never be his." "By what means will that be?" asked Pwyll. Then she told him the thought that was in her mind. And they talked long together. Then Gawl said, "Lord, it is meet that I have an answer to my request." "As much of that thou hast asked as it is in my power to give, thou shalt have," replied Pwyll. "My soul," said Rhiannon unto Gawl, "as for the feast and the banquet that are here, I have bestowed them upon the men of Dyved, and the household and the warriors that are with us. These can I not suffer to be given to any. In a year from to-night, a banquet shall be prepared for thee in this palace, that I may become thy bride."

So Gawl went forth to his possessions, and Pwyll went also back to Dyved. And they both spent that year until it was the time for the feast at the palace of Heveydd. Then Gawl, the son of Clud, set out to the feast that was prepared for him; and he came to the palace, and was received there with rejoicing. Pwyll, also, the chief of Dyved, came to the orchard with a hundred knights, as Rhiannon had commanded him. And Pwyll was clad in coarse and ragged garments, and wore large, clumsy old shoes upon his feet. And when he knew that the carousal after the meat had begun, he went toward the hall; and when he came into the hall he saluted Gawl, the son of Clud, and his company, both men and women. "Heaven prosper thee," said Gawl, "and friendly greeting be unto thee!" "Lord," said he, "may Heaven reward thee! I have an errand unto thee." "Welcome be thine errand, and if thou ask of me that which is right, thou shalt have it gladly." "It is fitting," answered he; "I crave but from want, and the boon I ask is to have this small bag that thou seest filled with meat." "A request within reason

is this," said he, "and gladly shalt thou have it. Bring him food." A great number of attendants arose and began to fill the bag; but for all they put into it, it was no fuller than at first. "My soul," said Gawl, "will thy bag ever be full?" "It will not, I declare to Heaven," said he, "for all that may be put into it, unless one possessed of lands, and domains, and treasure, shall arise and tread down with both his feet the food that is within the bag, and shall say, 'Enough has been put therein.'" Then said Rhiannon unto Gawl, the son of Clud, "Rise up quickly." "I will willingly arise," said he. So he rose up, and put his two feet into the bag. And Pwyll turned up the sides of the bag, so that Gawl was over his head in it. And he shut it up quickly, and slipped a knot upon the thongs, and blew his horn. And thereupon, behold, his knights came down upon the palace. And they seized all the host that had come with Gawl, and cast them into his own prison. And Pwyll threw off his rags, and his old shoes, and his tattered array. And as they came in, every one of Pwyll's knights struck a blow upon the bag, and asked, "What is here?" "A badger," said they. And in this manner they played, each of them striking the bag, either with his foot or with a staff. And thus played they with the bag. And then was the game of Badger in the Bag first played.

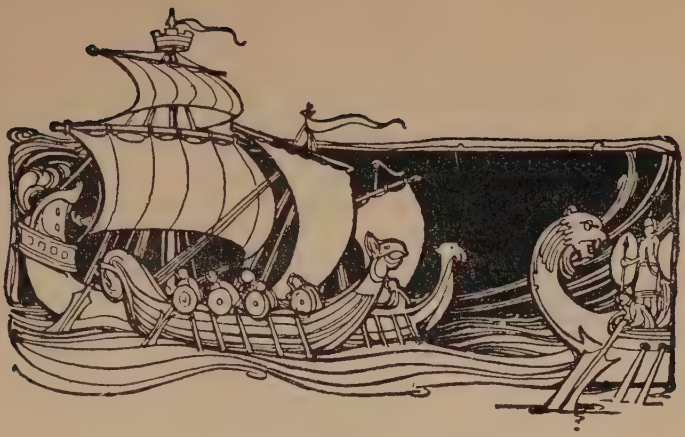
"Lord," said the man in the bag, "if thou wouldst but hear me, I merit not to be slain in a bag." Said Heveydd, "Lord, he speaks truth; it were fitting that thou listen to him, for he deserves not this." "Verily," said Pwyll, "I will do thy counsel concerning him." "Behold, this is my counsel then," said Rhiannon. "Thou art now in a position in which it behooves thee to satisfy suitors and minstrels. Let him give unto them in thy stead, and take a pledge from him that he will never seek to revenge that which has been done to him. And this will be punishment enough." "I will do this gladly," said the man in the bag. "And gladly will I accept it," said Pwyll," since it is the counsel of Heveydd and Rhiannon. Seek thyself sureties." "We will be for him," said Heveydd, "until his men be free to answer for him." And upon this he was let out of the bag, and his liegemen were liberated. "Verily, lord," said Gawl, "I am greatly hurt, and I have many bruises. With thy leave

I will go forth. I will leave nobles in my stead to answer for me in all that thou shalt require." "Willingly," said Pwyll, "mayest thou do thus." So Gawl went to his own possessions.

And the hall was set in order for Pwyll and the men of his host, and for them also of the palace, and they went to the tables and sat down. And as they had sat that time twelvemonth, so sat they that night. And they ate and feasted, and spent the night in mirth and tranquillity. And the time came that they should sleep, and Pwyll and Rhiannon went to their chamber.

And next morning at break of day, "My lord," said Rhiannon, "arise and begin to give thy gifts unto the minstrels. Refuse no one to-day that may claim thy bounty." "Thus shall it be gladly," said Pwyll, "both to-day and every day while the feast shall last." So Pwyll arose, and he caused silence to be proclaimed, and desired all the suitors and minstrels to show and to point out what gifts they desired. And this being done, the feast went on, and he denied no one while it lasted. And when the feast was ended, Pwyll said unto Heveydd, "My lord, with thy permission, I will set out for Dyved to-morrow." "Certainly," said Hedevyd; "may Heaven prosper thee! Fix also a time when Rhiannon shall follow thee." "By Heaven," said Pwyll, "we will go hence together." "Willest thou this, lord?" said Heveydd. "Yes, lord," answered Pwyll.

And the next day they set forward towards Dyved, and journeyed to the palace of Narberth, where a feast was made ready for them. And there came to them great numbers of the chief men and the most noble ladies of the land, and of these there were none to whom Rhiannon did not give some rich gift, either a bracelet, or a ring, or a precious stone. And they ruled the land prosperously that year and the next.



CHAPTER IX.

Bran'wen, the Daughter of Llyr (Lhiër).

Bendigeid Vran, the son of Llyr, was the crowned king of this island, and he was exalted from the crown of London. And one afternoon he was at Harlech, in Ardudwy, at his court; and he sat upon the rock of Harlech, looking over the sea. And with him were his brother, Manawyddan, the son of Llyr, and his brothers by the mother's side, Nissyen and Evnissyen, and many nobles likewise, as was fitting to see around a king. His two brothers by the mother's side were the sons of Euroswydd, and one of these youths was a good youth, and of gentle nature, and would make peace between his kindred, and cause his family to be friends when their wrath was at the highest, and this one was Nissyen; but the other would cause strife between his two brothers when they were most at peace. And as they sat thus, they beheld thirteen ships coming from the south of Ireland, and making towards them; and they came with a swift motion, the wind being behind them; and they neared them rapidly. "I see ships afar," said the king, "coming swiftly towards the land. Command the men of the court that they equip themselves, and go and learn their intent." So the men equipped themselves, and went down towards them. And when they saw the ships near, certain were they that they had never seen ships better furnished. Beautiful flags of satin were upon them. And, behold, one of the ships outstripped the others, and they saw a

shield lifted up above the side of the ship, and the point of the shield was upwards, in token of peace. And the men drew near, that they might hold converse. Then they put out boats, and came toward the land. And they saluted the king. Now the king could hear them from the place where he was upon the rock above their heads. "Heaven prosper you," said he, "and be ye welcome! To whom do these ships belong, and who is the chief amongst you?" "Lord," said they, "Matholch, king of Ireland, is here, and these ships belong to him." "Wherefore comes he?" asked the king, "and will he come to the land?" "He is a suitor unto thee, lord," said they, "and he will not land unless he have his boon." "And what may that be?" inquired the king. "He desires to ally himself, lord, with thee," said they, "and he comes to ask Branwen, the daughter of Llyr, that, if it seem well to thee, the Island of the Mighty[1] may be leagued with Ireland, and both become more powerful." "Verily," said he, "let him come to land, and we will take counsel thereupon." And this answer was brought to Matholch. "I will go willingly," said he. So he landed, and they received him joyfully; and great was the throng in the palace that night between his hosts and those of the court; and next day they took counsel, and they resolved to bestow Branwen upon Matholch. Now she was one of the three chief ladies of this island, and she was the fairest damsel in the world.

And they fixed upon Aberfraw as the place where she should become his bride. And they went thence, and towards Aberfraw the hosts proceeded, Matholch and his host in their ships, Bendigeid Vran and his host by land, until they came to Aberfraw. And at Aberfraw they began the feast, and sat down. And thus sat they: the king of the Island of the Mighty and Manawyddan, the son of Llyr, on one side, and Matholch on the other side, and Branwen, the daughter of Llyr, beside him. And they were not within a house, but under tents. No house could ever contain Bendigeid Vran. And they began the banquet, and caroused and discoursed. And when it was more pleasing to them to sleep than to carouse, they went to rest, and Branwen became Matholch's bride.

[1] The Island of the Mighty is one of the many names bestowed upon Britain by the Welsh.

And next day they arose, and all they of the court, and the officers began to equip, and to range the horses and the attendants, and they ranged them in order as far as the sea.

And, behold, one day Evnissyen, the quarrelsome man, of whom it is spoken above, came by chance into the place where the horses of Matholch were, and asked whose horses they might be. "They are the horses of Matholch, king of Ireland, who is married to Branwen, thy sister; his horses are they." "And is it thus they have done with a maiden such as she, and moreover my sister, bestowing her without my consent? They could have offered no greater insult to me than this," said he. And thereupon he rushed under the horses, and cut off their lips at the teeth, and their ears close to their heads, and their tails close to their backs; and he disfigured the horses, and rendered them useless.

And they came with these tidings unto Matholch, saying that the horses were disfigured and injured, so that not one of them could ever be of any use again. "Verily, lord," said one, "it was an insult unto thee, and as such was it meant." "Of a truth, it is a marvel to me that, if they desire to insult me, they should have given me a maiden of such high rank, and so much beloved of her kindred, as they have done." "Lord," said another, "thou seest that thus it is, and there is nothing for thee to do but to go to thy ships." And thereupon towards his ships he set out.

And tidings came to Bendigeid Vran that Matholch was quitting the court without asking leave, and messengers were sent to inquire of him wherefore he did so. And the messengers that went were Iddic, the son of Anarawd, and Heveyd Hir. And these overtook him, and asked of him what he designed to do, and wherefore he went forth. "Of a truth," said he, "if I had known, I had not come hither. I have been altogether insulted; no one had ever worse treatment than I have had here." "Truly, lord, it was not the will of any that are of the court," said they, "nor of any that are of the council, that thou shouldst have received this insult; and as thou hast been insulted, the dishonor is greater unto Bendigeid Vran than unto thee." "Verily," said he, "I think so. Nevertheless, he cannot recall the insult." These men returned with that answer to the

place where Bendigeid Vran was, and they told him what reply Matholch had given them. "Truly," said he, "there are no means by which we may prevent his going away at enmity with us that we will not take." "Well, lord," said they, "send after him another embassy." "I will do so," said he. "Arise, Manawyddan, son of Llyr, and Heveyd Hir, and go after him, and tell him that he shall have a sound horse for every one that has been injured. And beside that, as an atonement for the insult, he shall have a staff of silver as large and as tall as himself, and a plate of gold of the breadth of his face. And show unto him who it was that did this, and that it was done against my will; but that he who did it is my brother, and therefore it would be hard for me to put him to death. And let him come and meet me," said he, "and we will make peace in any way he may desire."

The embassy went after Matholch, and told him all these sayings in a friendly manner; and he listened thereunto. "Men," said he, "I will take counsel." So to the council he went. And in the council they considered that, if they should refuse this, they were likely to have more shame rather than to obtain so great an atonement. They resolved, therefore, to accept it, and they returned to the court in peace.

Then the pavilions and the tents were set in order, after the fashion of a hall; and they went to meat, and as they had sat at the beginning of the feast so sat they there. And Matholch and Bendigeid Vran began to discourse; and, behold, it seemed to Bendigeid Vran, while they talked, that Matholch was not so cheerful as he had been before. And he thought that the chieftain might be sad because of the smallness of the atonement which he had for the wrong that had been done him. "O man," said Bendigeid Vran, "thou dost not discourse to-night so cheerfully as thou wast wont. And if it be because of the smallness of the atonement, thou shalt add thereunto whatsoever thou mayest choose, and to-morrow I will pay thee for the horses." "Lord," said he, "Heaven reward thee!" "And I will enhance the atonement," said Bendigeid Vran, "for I will give unto thee a caldron, the property of which is, that if one of thy men be slain to-day, and be cast therein, to-morrow he will be as well as ever he was at the best, except that he will

not regain his speech." And thereupon he gave him great thanks, and very joyful was he for that cause.

That night they continued to discourse as much as they would, and had minstrelsy and carousing; and when it was more pleasant to them to sleep than to sit longer, they went to rest. And thus was the banquet carried on with joyousness; and when it was finished, Matholch journeyed towards Ireland, and Branwen with him; and they went from Aber Menei with thirteen ships, and came to Ireland. And in Ireland was there great joy because of their coming. And not one great man nor noble lady visited Branwen unto whom she gave not either a clasp or a ring, or a royal jewel to keep, such as it was honorable to be seen departing with. And in these things she spent that year in much renown, and she passed her time pleasantly, enjoying honor and friendship. And in due time a son was born unto her, and the name that they gave him was Gwern, the son of Matholch, and they put the boy out to be nursed in a place where were the best men of Ireland.

And behold, in the second year a tumult arose in Ireland, on account of the insult which Matholch had received in Wales, and the payment made him for his horses. And his foster-brothers, and such as were nearest to him, blamed him openly for that matter. And he might have no peace by reason of the tumult, until they should revenge upon him this disgrace. And the vengeance which they took was to drive away Branwen from the same chamber with him, and to make her cook for the court; and they caused the butcher, after he had cut up the meat, to come to her and give her every day a blow on the ear; and such they made her punishment.

"Verily, lord," said his men to Matholch, "forbid now the ships and the ferry-boats, and the coracles, that they go not into Wales, and such as come over from Wales hither, imprison them, that they go not back for this thing to be known there." And he did so; and it was thus for no less than three years.

And Branwen reared a starling in the cover of the kneading-trough, and she taught it to speak, and she taught the bird what manner of man her brother was. And she wrote a letter of her woes, and the despite with which she was treated, and she bound the letter to the root of the bird's wing, and sent it towards

Wales. And the bird came to that island; and one day it found Bendigeid Vran at Caer Seiont in Arvon, conferring there, and it alighted upon his shoulder and ruffled its feathers, so that the letter was seen, and they knew that the bird had been reared in a domestic manner.

Then Bendigeid Vran took the letter and looked upon it. And when he had read the letter, he grieved exceedingly at the tidings of Branwen's woes. And immediately he began sending messengers to summon the island together. And he caused sevenscore and four of his chief men to come unto him, and he complained to them of the grief that his sister endured. So they took counsel. And in the counsel they resolved to go to Ireland, and to leave seven men as princes at home, and Caradoc,[1] the son of Bran, as the chief of them.

Bendigeid Vran, with the host of which we spoke, sailed towards Ireland; and it was not far across the sea, and he came to shoal water. Now the swineherds of Matholch were upon the sea-shore, and they came to Matholch. "Lord," said they, "greeting be unto thee." "Heaven protect you!" said he; "have you any news?" "Lord," said they, "we have marvellous news. A wood have we seen upon the sea, in a place where we never yet saw a single tree." "This is indeed a marvel," said he; "saw you aught else?" "We saw, lord," said they, "a vast mountain, beside the wood, which moved, and there was a lofty ridge on the top of the mountain, and a lake on each side of the ridge. And the wood and the mountain, and all these things, moved." "Verily," said he, "there is none who can know aught concerning this unless it be Branwen."

Messengers then went unto Branwen. "Lady," said they, "what thinkest thou that this is?" "The men of the Island of the Mighty, who have come hither on hearing of my ill-treatment and of my woes." "What is the forest that is seen upon the sea?" asked they. "The yards and the masts of ships," she answered. "Alas!" said they; "what is the mountain that is seen by the side of the ships?" "Bendigeid Vran, my brother," she replied, "coming to shoal water, and he is wading to the land." "What is the lofty ridge, with the lake on each side thereof?" "On looking towards this island he is wroth,

[1] Caractacus.

and his two eyes on each side of his nose are the two lakes on each side of the ridge."

The warriors and chief men of Ireland were brought together in haste, and they took counsel. "Lord," said the neighbors unto Matholch, "there is no other counsel than this alone. Thou shalt give the kingdom to Gwern, the son of Branwen his sister, as a compensation for the wrong and despite that has been done unto Branwen. And he will make peace with thee." And in the council it was resolved that this message should be sent to Bendigeid Vran, lest the country should be destroyed. And this peace was made. And Matholch caused a great house to be built for Bendigeid Vran and his host. Thereupon came the hosts into the house. The men of the island of Ireland entered the house on the one side, and the men of the Island of the Mighty on the other. And as soon as they had sat down, there was concord between them; and the sovereignty was conferred upon the boy. When the peace was concluded, Bendigeid Vran called the boy unto him, and from Bendigeid Vran the boy went unto Manawyddan, and he was beloved by all that beheld him. And from Manawyddan the boy was called by Nissyen, the son of Euroswydd, and the boy went unto him lovingly. "Wherefore," said Evnissyen, "comes not my nephew, the son of my sister, unto me? Though he were not king of Ireland, yet willingly would I fondle the boy." "Cheerfully let him go to thee," said Bendigeid Vran; and the boy went unto him cheerfully. "By my confession to Heaven," said Evnissyen in his heart, "unthought of is the slaughter that I will this instant commit."

Then he arose and took up the boy, and before any one in the house could seize hold of him he thrust the boy headlong into the blazing fire. And when Branwen saw her son burning in the fire, she strove to leap into the fire also, from the place where she sat between her two brothers. But Bendigeid Vran grasped her with one hand and his shield with the other. Then they all hurried about the house, and never was there made so great a tumult by any host in one house as was made by them, as each man armed himself. And while they all sought their arms, Bendigeid Vran supported Branwen between his shield and his shoulder. And they fought.

Then the Irish kindled a fire under the caldron of renovation, and they cast the dead bodies into the caldron until it was full; and the next day they came forth fighting men, as good as before, except that they were not able to speak. Then when Evnissyen saw the dead bodies of the men of the Island of the Mighty nowhere resuscitated, he said in his heart, "Alas! woe is me, that I should have been the cause of bringing the men of the Island of the Mighty into so great a strait. Evil betide me if I find not a deliverance therefrom." And he cast himself among the dead bodies of the Irish; and two unshod Irishmen came to him, and, taking him to be one of the Irish, flung him into the caldron. And he stretched himself out in the caldron, so that he rent the caldron into four pieces, and burst his own heart also.

In consequence of this, the men of the Island of the Mighty obtained such success as they had; but they were not victorious, for only seven men of them all escaped, and Bendigeid Vran himself was wounded in the foot with a poisoned dart. Now the men that escaped were Pryderi, Manawyddan, Taliesin, and four others.

And Bendigeid Vran commanded them that they should cut off his head "And take you my head," said he, "and bear it even unto the White Mount in London, and bury it there with the face towards France. And so long as it lies there, no enemy shall ever land on the island." So they cut off his head, and these seven went forward therewith. And Branwen was the eighth with them. And they came to land on Aber Alaw, and they sat down to rest. And Branwen looked towards Ireland, and towards the Island of the Mighty, to see if she could descry them. "Alas!" said she, "woe is me that I was ever born; two islands have been destroyed because of me." Then she uttered a groan, and there broke her heart. And they made her a four-sided grave, and buried her upon the banks of the Alaw.

Then the seven men journeyed forward, bearing the head with them; and as they went, behold there met them a multitude of men and women. "Have you any tidings?" asked Manawyddan. "We have none," said they, "save that Caswallawn, the son of Beli, has conquered the Island of the Mighty, and is

crowned king in London." "What has become," said they, "of Caradoc, the son of Bran, and the seven men who were left with him in this island?" "Caswallawn came upon them, and slew six of the men, and Caradoc's heart broke for grief thereof." And the seven men journeyed on towards London, and they buried the head in the White Mount, as Bendigeid Vran had directed them.[1]

[1] There is a Triad upon the story of the head buried under the White Tower of London, as a charm against invasion. Arthur, it seems, proudly disinterred the head, preferring to hold the island by his own strength alone.

CHAPTER X.

Ma-na-wydd'an.

Pwyll and Rhiannon had a son, whom they named Pryderi. And when he was grown up, Pwyll, his father, died. And Pryderi married Kicva, the daughter of Gwynn Gloy.

Now Manawyddan returned from the war in Ireland, and he found that his cousin had seized all his possessions, and much grief and heaviness came upon him. "Alas! woe is me!" he exclaimed; "there is none save myself without a home and a resting-place." "Lord," said Pryderi, "be not so sorrowful. Thy cousin is king of the Island of the Mighty, and though he has done thee wrong, thou hast never been a claimant of land or possessions." "Yea," answered he, "but although this man is my cousin, it grieveth me to see any one in the place of my brother, Bendigeid Vran; neither can I be happy in the same dwelling with him." "Wilt thou follow the counsel of another?" said Pryderi. "I stand in need of counsel," he answered; "and what may that counsel be?" "Seven cantrevs belong unto me," said Pryderi, "wherein Rhiannon, my mother dwells. I will bestow her upon thee, and the seven cantrevs with her; and though thou hadst no possessions but those cantrevs only, thou couldst not have any fairer

than they. Do thou and Rhiannon enjoy them, and if thou desire any possessions thou wilt not despise these." "I do not, chieftain," said he. "Heaven reward thee for thy friendship! I will go with thee to seek Rhiannon, and to look at thy possessions." "Thou wilt do well," he answered; "and I believe that thou didst never hear a lady discourse better than she, and when she was in her prime, none was ever fairer. Even now her aspect is not uncomely."

They set forth, and, however long the journey, they came at last to Dyved; and a feast was prepared for them by Rhiannon and Kicva. Then began Manawyddan and Rhiannon to sit and to talk together; and his mind and his thoughts became warmed towards her, and he thought in his heart he had never beheld any lady more fulfilled of grace and beauty than she. "Pryderi," said he, "I will that it be as thou didst say." "What saying was that?" asked Rhiannon. "Lady," said Pryderi, "I did offer thee as a wife to Manawyddan, the son of Llyr." "By that will I gladly abide," said Rhiannon. "Right glad am I also," said Manawyddan; "may Heaven reward him who hath shown unto me friendship so perfect as this!"

And before the feast was over she became his bride. Said Pryderi, "Tarry ye here the rest of the feast, and I will go into England to tender my homage unto Caswallawn, the son of Beli." "Lord," said Rhiannon, "Caswallawn is in Kent; thou mayest therefore tarry at the feast, and wait until he shall be nearer." "We will wait," he answered." So they finished the feast. And they began to make the circuit of Dyved, and to hunt, and to take their pleasure. And as they went through the country, they had never seen lands more pleasant to live in, nor better hunting grounds, nor greater plenty of honey and fish. And such was the friendship between these four, that they would not be parted from each other by night nor by day.

And in the midst of all this he went to Caswallawn at Oxford, and tendered his homage; and honorable was his reception there, and highly was he praised for offering his homage.

And after his return Pryderi and Manawyddan feasted and took their ease and pleasure. And they began a feast at Narberth, for it was the chief palace. And when they had ended the first meal, while those who served them ate, they arose and

went forth, and proceeded to the Gorsedd, that is, the Mound of Narberth, and their retinue with them. And as they sat thus, behold a peal of thunder, and with the violence of the thunder-storm, lo! there came a fall of mist, so thick that not one of them could see the other. And after the mist it became light all around. And when they looked towards the place where they were wont to see cattle and herds and dwellings, they saw nothing now, neither house, nor beast, nor smoke, nor fire, nor man, nor dwelling, but the buildings of the court empty, and desert, and uninhabited, without either man or beast within them. And truly all their companions were lost to them without their knowing aught of what had befallen them, save those four only.

"In the name of Heaven," said Manawyddan, "where are they of the court, and all my host beside? Let us go and see."

So they came to the castle, and saw no man, and into the hall, and to the sleeping place, and there was none; and in the mead-cellar and in the kitchen there was naught but desolation. Then they began to go through the land, and all the possessions that they had; and they visited the houses and dwellings, and found nothing but wild beasts. And when they had consumed their feast and all their provisions, they fed upon the prey they killed in hunting, and the honey of the wild swarms.

And one morning Pryderi and Manawyddan rose up to hunt, and they ranged their dogs and went forth. And some of the dogs ran before them, and came to a bush which was near at hand; but as soon as they were come to the bush, they hastily drew back, and returned to the men, their hair bristling up greatly. "Let us go near to the bush," said Pryderi, "and see what is in it." And as they came near, behold, a wild boar of a pure white color rose up from the bush. Then the dogs, being set on by the men, rushed towards him; but he left the bush, and fell back a little way from the men, and made a stand against the dogs, without retreating from them, until the men had come near. And when the men came up, he fell back a second time, and betook him to flight. Then they pursued the boar until they beheld a vast and lofty castle, all newly built, in a place where they had never before seen either stone or building. And the

boar ran swiftly into the castle, and the dogs after him. Now when the boar and the dogs had gone into the castle, the men began to wonder at finding a castle in a place where they had never before seen any building whatsoever. And from the top of the Gorsedd they looked and listened for the dogs. But so long as they were there, they heard not one of the dogs, nor aught concerning them.

"Lord," said Pryderi, "I will go into the castle to get tidings of the dogs." "Truly," he replied, "thou wouldst be unwise to go into this castle, which thou hast never seen till now. If thou wouldst follow my counsel, thou wouldst not enter therein. Whosoever has cast a spell over this land, has caused this castle to be here." "Of a truth," answered Pryderi, "I cannot thus give up my dogs." And for all the counsel that Manawyddan gave him, yet to the castle he went.

When he came within the castle, neither man nor beast, nor boar, nor dogs, nor house, nor dwelling, saw he within it. But in the centre of the castle-floor he beheld a fountain with marble-work around it, and on the margin of the fountain a golden bowl upon a marble slab, and chains hanging from the air, to which he saw no end.

And he was greatly pleased with the beauty of the gold, and with the rich workmanship of the bowl; and he went up to the bowl, and laid hold of it. And when he had taken hold of it, his hands stuck to the bowl, and his feet to the slab on which the bowl was placed; and all his joyousness forsook him, so that he could not utter a word. And thus he stood.

And Manawyddan waited for him till near the close of the day. And late in the evening, being certain that he should have no tidings of Pryderi or the dogs, he went back to the palace. And as he entered, Rhiannon looked at him. "Where," said she, "are thy companion and thy dogs?" "Behold," he answered, "the adventure that has befallen me." And he related it all unto her. "An evil companion hast thou been," said Rhiannon, "and a good companion hast thou lost." And with that word she went out, and proceeded towards the castle, according to the direction which he gave her. The gate of the castle she found open. She was nothing daunted, and she went in. And as she went in, she perceived Pryderi laying hold of

the bowl, and she went towards him. "O my lord," said she, "what dost thou here?" And she took hold of the bowl with him; and as she did so, her hands also became fast to the bowl, and her feet to the slab, and she was not able to utter a word. And with that, as it became night, lo! there came thunder upon them, and a fall of mist; and thereupon the castle vanished, and they with it.

When Kicva, the daughter of Glynn Gloy, saw that there was no one in the palace but herself and Manawyddan, she sorrowed so that she cared not whether she lived or died. And Manawyddan saw this. "Thou art in the wrong," said he, "if through fear of me thou grievest thus. I call Heaven to witness that thou hast never seen friendship more pure than that which I will bear thee, as long as Heaven will that thou shouldst be thus. I declare to thee, that, were I in the dawn of youth, I would keep my faith unto Pryderi, and unto thee also will I keep it. Be there no fear upon thee, therefore." "Heaven reward thee!" she said; "and that is what I deemed of thee." And the damsel thereupon took courage, and was glad.

"Truly, lady," said Manawyddan, "it is not fitting for us to stay here; we have lost our dogs, and cannot get food. Let us go into England; it is easiest for us to find support there." "Gladly, lord," said she, "we will do so." And they set forth together to England.

"Lord," said she, "what craft wilt thou follow? Take up one that is seemly. "None other will I take," answered he, "but that of making shoes." "Lord," said she, "such a craft becomes not a man so nobly born as thou." "By that, however, will I abide," said he. "I know nothing thereof," said Kicva. "But I know," answered Manawyddan, "and I will teach thee to stitch. We will not attempt to dress the leather, but we will buy it ready dressed, and will make the shoes from it."

So they went into England, and went as far as Hereford; and they betook themselves to making shoes. And he began by buying the best cordwain that could be had in the town, and none other would he buy. And he associated himself with the best goldsmith in the town, and caused him to make clasps for the shoes, and to gild the clasps; and he marked how it was

done until he learned the method. And therefore is he called one of the three makers of gold shoes. And when they could be had from him, not a shoe nor hose was bought of any of the cordwainers in the town. But when the cordwainers perceived that their gains were failing (for as Manawyddan shaped the work, so Kicva stitched it), they came together and took counsel, and agreed that they would slay them. And he had warning thereof, and it was told him how the cordwainers had agreed together to slay him.

"Lord," said Kicva, "wherefore should this be borne from these boors?" "Nay," said he, "we will go back unto Dyved." So towards Dyved they set forth.

Now Manawyddan, when he set out to return to Dyved, took with him a burden of wheat. And then he began to prepare some ground, and he sowed a croft, and a second, and a third. And no wheat in the world ever sprung up better. And the three crofts prospered with perfect growth, and no man ever saw fairer wheat than it.

And thus passed the seasons of the year until the harvest came. And he went to look at one of his crofts, and, behold, it was ripe. "I will reap this to-morrow," said he. And that night he went back to Narberth, and on the morrow, in the gray dawn, he went to reap the croft; and when he came there, he found nothing but the bare straw. Every one of the ears of the wheat was cut off from the stalk, and all the ears carried entirely away, and nothing but the straw left. And at this he marvelled greatly.

Then he went to look at another croft, and, behold, that also was ripe. "Verily," said he, "this will I reap to-morrow." And on the morrow he came with the intent to reap it; and when he came there, he found nothing but the bare straw. "O gracious Heaven!" he exclaimed, "I know that whosoever has begun my ruin is completing it, and has also destroyed the country with me."

Then he went to look at the third croft; and when he came there, finer wheat had there never been seen, and this also was ripe. "Evil betide me," said he, "if I watch not here to-night. Whoever carried off the other corn will come in like manner to take this, and I will know who it is." And he told Kicva all that had befallen. "Verily," said she, "what thinkest thou to

do?'' ''I will watch the croft to-night,'' said he. And he went to watch the croft.

And at midnight he heard something stirring among the wheat; and he looked, and behold, the mightiest host of mice in the world, which could neither be numbered nor measured. And he knew not what it was until the mice had went their way into the croft, and each of them, climbing up the straw, and bending it down with its weight, had cut off one of the ears of wheat, and had carried it away, leaving there the stalk; and he saw not a single straw there that had not had a mouse to it. And they all took their way, carrying the ears with them.

In wrath and anger did he rush upon the mice; but he could no more come up with them than if they had been gnats or birds of the air, except one only, which, though it was but sluggish, went so fast that a man on foot could scarce overtake it. And after this one he went, and he caught it, and put it in his glove, and tied up the opening of the glove with a string, and kept it with him, and returned to the palace. Then he came to the hall where Kicva was, and he lighted a fire, and hung the glove by the string upon a peg. ''What hast thou there, lord?'' said Kicva. ''A thief,'' said he, ''that I found robbing me.'' ''What kind of a thief may it be, lord, that thou couldst put into thy glove?'' said she. Then he told her how the mice came to the last of the fields in his sight. ''And one of them was less nimble than the rest, and is now in my glove; to-morrow I will hang it.'' ''My lord,'' said she, ''this is marvellous; but yet it would be unseemly for a man of dignity like thee to be hanging such a reptile as this.'' ''Woe betide me,'' said he, ''if I would not hang them all, could I catch them, and such as I have I will hang.'' ''Verily, lord,'' said she, ''there is no reason that I should succor this reptile, except to prevent discredit unto thee. Do therefore, lord, as thou wilt.''

Then he went to the Mound of Narberth, taking the mouse with him. And he set up two forks on the highest part of the mound. And while he was doing this, behold, he saw a scholar coming towards him, in old and poor and tattered garments. And it was now seven years since he had seen in that place either man or beast, except those four persons who had remained together until two of them were lost.

"My lord," said the scholar, "good day to thee." "Heaven prosper thee, and my greeting be unto thee! And whence dost thou come, scholar?" asked he. "I come, lord, from singing in England; and wherefore dost thou inquire?" "Because for the last seven years," answered he, "I have seen no man here save four secluded persons, and thyself this moment." "Truly, lord," said he, "I go through this land unto mine own. And what work art thou upon, lord?" "I am hanging a thief that I caught robbing me," said he. "What manner of thief is that?" asked the scholar. "I see a creature in thy hand like unto a mouse, and ill does it become a man of rank equal to thine to touch a reptile such as this. Let it go forth free." "I will not let it go free, by Heaven," said he; "I caught it robbing me, and the doom of a thief I will inflict upon it, and I will hang it." "Lord," said he, "rather than see a man of rank equal to thine at such a work as this, I would give thee a pound, which I have received as alms, to let the reptile go forth free." "I will not let it go free," said he, "neither will I sell it." "As thou wilt, lord," he answered; "I care naught." And the scholar went his way.

And as he was placing the cross-beam upon the two forks, behold, a priest came towards him, upon a horse covered with trappings. "Good day to thee, lord," said he. "Heaven prosper thee!" said Manawyddan; "thy blessing." "The blessing of Heaven be upon thee! And what, lord, art thou doing?" "I am hanging a thief that I caught robbing me," said he. "What manner of thief, lord?" asked he. "A creature," he answered, "in form of a mouse. It has been robbing me, and I am inflicting upon it the doom of a thief." "Lord," said he, "rather than see thee touch this reptile, I would purchase its freedom." "By my confession to Heaven, neither will I sell it nor set it free." "It is true, lord, that it is worth nothing to buy; but rather than see thee defile thyself by touching such a reptile as this, I will give thee three pounds to let it go." "I will not, by Heaven," said he, "take any price for it. As it ought, so shall it be hanged." And the priest went his way.

Then he noosed the string around the mouse's neck, and as he was about to draw it up, behold, he saw a bishop's retinue,

with his sumpter-horses and his attendants. And the bishop himself came towards him. And he stayed his work. "Lord Bishop," said he, "thy blessing." "Heaven's blessing be unto thee!" said he. "What work art thou upon?" "Hanging a thief that I caught robbing me," said he. "Is not that a mouse that I see in thy hand?" "Yes," answered he, "and she has robbed me." "Ay," said he, "since I have come at the doom of this reptile, I will ransom it of thee. I will give thee seven pounds for it, and that rather than see a man of rank equal to thine destroying so vile a reptile as this. Let it loose, and thou shalt have the money." "I declare to Heaven that I will not let it loose." "If thou wilt not loose it for this, I will give thee four and twenty pounds of ready money to set it free." "I will not set it free, by Heaven, for as much again," said he. "If thou wilt not set it free for this, I will give thee all the horses that thou seest in this plain, and the seven loads of baggage, and the seven horses that they are upon." "I will not," he replied. "Since for this thou wilt not set it free, do so at what price soever thou wilt." "I will that Rhiannon and Pryderi be free," said he. "That thou shalt have," he answered. "Not yet will I loose the mouse, by Heaven." "What then wouldst thou?" "That the charm and the illusion be removed from the seven cantrevs of Dyved." "This shalt thou have also; set therefore the mouse free." "I will not set it free, by Heaven," said he, "till I know who the mouse may be." "She is my wife." "Wherefore came she to me?" "To despoil thee," he answered. "I am Lloyd, the son of Kilwed, and I cast the charm over the seven cantrevs of Dyved. And it was to avenge Gawl, the son of Clud, from the friendship I had towards him, that I cast the charm. And upon Pryderi did I avenge Gawl, the son of Clud, for the game of Badger in the Bag, that Pwyll, the son of Auwyn played upon him. And when it was known that thou wast come to dwell in the land, my household came and besought me to transform them into mice, that they might destroy thy corn. And they went the first and the second night, and destroyed thy two crops. And the third night came unto me my wife and the ladies of the court, and besought me to transform them. And I transformed them. Now she is not in her usual health. And had she been in her usual health, thou

wouldst not have been able to overtake her; but since this has taken place, and she has been caught, I will restore to thee Pryderi and Rhiannon, and I will take the charm and illusion from off Dyved. Set her therefore free." "I will not set her free yet." "What wilt thou more?" he asked. "I will that there be no more charm upon the seven cantrevs of Dyved, and that none shall be put upon it henceforth; moreover, that vengeance be never taken for this, either upon Pryderi or Rhiannon, or upon me." "All this shalt thou have. And truly thou hast done wisely in asking this. Upon thy head would have lit all this trouble." "Yea," said he, "for fear thereof was it that I required this." "Set now my wife at liberty." "I will not," said he, "until I see Pryderi and Rhiannon with me free." "Behold, here they come," he answered.

And thereupon behold Pryderi and Rhiannon. And he rose up to meet them, and greeted them, and sat down beside them. "Ah, chieftain, set now my wife at liberty," said the bishop. "Hast thou not received all thou didst ask?" "I will release her, gladly," said he. And thereupon he set her free.

Then he struck her with a magic wand, and she was changed back into a young woman, the fairest ever seen.

"Look round upon thy land," said he, "and thou wilt see it all tilled and peopled as it was in its best estate." And he rose up and looked forth. And when he looked he saw all the lands tilled, and full of herds and dwellings.

And thus ends this portion of the Mabinogi.

The poet Southey, in a letter to a friend, thus refers to the preceding story:

"You will read the Mabinogeon, concerning which I ought to have talked to you. In the last, that most odd and Arabian-like story of the mouse, mention is made of a begging scholar, that helps to the date; but where did the Cymri get the imagination that could produce such a tale? That enchantment of the basin hanging by the chain from heaven is in the wildest spirit of the Arabian Nights. I am perfectly astonished that such fictions should exist in Welsh. They throw no light on the origin of romance, everything being utterly dissimilar to what

we mean by that term, but they do open a new world of fiction ; and if the date of their language be fixed about the twelfth or thirteenth century, I cannot but think the mythological substance is of far earlier date ; very probably brought from the East by some of the first settlers or conquerors."

CHAPTER XI.

Kil'wich and Ol'wen.

Kilydd, the son of Prince Kelyddon, desired a wife as a helpmate, and the wife that he chose was Goleudid, the daughter of Prince Anlawd. And after their union the people put up prayers that they might have an heir. And they had a son through the prayers of the people; and called his name Kilwich.

After this the boy's mother, Goleudid, the daughter of Prince Anlawd, fell sick. Then she called her husband to her, and said to him, "Of this sickness I shall die, and thou wilt take another wife. Now wives are the gift of the Lord, but it would be wrong for thee to harm thy son. Therefore I charge thee that thou take not a wife until thou see a briar with two blossoms upon my grave." And this he promised her. Then she besought him to dress her grave every year, that no weeds might grow thereon. So the queen died. Now the king sent an attendant every morning to see if anything were growing upon the grave. And at the end of the seventh year they neglected that which they had promised to the queen.

One day the king went to hunt; and he rode to the place of burial to see the grave, and to know if it were time that he should take a wife: and the king saw the briar. And when he saw it, the king took counsel where he should find a wife. Said one of his counsellors, "I know a wife that will suit thee well; and she is the wife of King Doged." And they resolved to go to seek her; and they slew the king, and brought away his wife. And

they conquered the king's lands. And he married the widow of King Doged, the sister of Yspadaden Penkawr.

And one day his stepmother said to Kilwich, "It were well for thee to have a wife." "I am not yet of an age to wed," answered the youth. Then said she unto him, "I declare to thee that it is thy destiny not to be suited with a wife until thou obtain Olwen, the daughter of Yspadaden Penkawr." And the youth blushed, and the love of the maiden diffused itself through all his frame, although he had never seen her. And his father inquired of him, "What has come over thee, my son, and what aileth thee?" "My stepmother has declared to me that I shall never have a wife until I obtain Olwen, the daughter of Yspadaden Penkawr." "That will be easy for thee," answered his father. "Arthur is thy cousin. Go, therefore, unto Arthur, to cut thy hair, and ask this of him as a boon."

And the youth pricked forth upon a steed with head dappled gray, four winters old, firm of limb, with shell-formed hoofs, having a bridle of linked gold on his head, and upon him a saddle of costly gold.

> "And in his hand were two spears
> Of silver, well-tempered, and of an edge
> To wound the wind, and swifter
> Than the fall of dew."

A gold-hilted sword was upon his thigh, the blade of which was gilded, bearing a cross of inlaid gold of the hue of the lightning of heaven. His war-horn was of ivory. Before him were two brindled, white-breasted greyhounds, having strong collars of rubies about their necks, reaching from the shoulder to the ear. And the one that was upon the left side bounded across to the right side, and the one on the right to the left, and, like two sea-swallows, sported around him. And his courser cast up four sods, with his four hoofs, like four swallows in the air, about his head, now above, now below. About him was a four-cornered cloth of purple, and an apple of gold was at each corner, and every one of the apples was of the value of an hundred kine. And there was precious gold of the value of three hundred kine upon his shoes, and upon his stirrups, from his knee to the tip of his toe. And the blade of grass bent not beneath him, so

light was his courser's tread, as he journeyed toward the gate of Arthur's palace.[1]

Spoke the youth: "Is there a porter?" "There is; and if thou holdest not thy peace, small will be thy welcome. I am Arthur's porter every first day of January." "Open the portal." "I will not open it." "Wherefore not?"

"The knife is in the meat,
And the drink is in the horn,"

and there is revelry in Arthur's hall; and none may enter therein but the son of a king of a privileged country, or a craftsman bringing his craft. But there will be refreshment for thy dogs and for thy horse; and for thee there will be collops cooked and peppered, and luscious wine, and mirthful songs; and food for fifty men shall be brought unto thee in the guest-chamber, where the stranger and the sons of other countries eat, who come not into the precincts of the palace of Arthur. Thou wilt fare no worse there than thou wouldst with Arthur in the court. A lady shall smooth thy couch, and shall lull thee with songs; and early to-morrow morning, when the gate is open for the multitude that came hither to-day, for thee shall it be opened first, and thou mayest sit in the place that thou shalt choose in Arthur's hall, from the upper end to the lower." Said the youth: "That will I not do. If thou openest the gate, it is well. If thou dost not open it, I will bring disgrace upon thy lord, and evil report upon thee. And I will set up three shouts at this very gate, than which none were ever heard more deadly." "What clamor soever thou mayest make," said Glewlwyd the porter, "against the laws of Arthur's palace, shalt thou not enter therein, until I first go and speak with Arthur."

Then Glewlwyd went into the hall. And Arthur said to him, "Hast thou news from the gate?" "Half of my life is passed," said Glewlwyd, "and half of thine. I was heretofore in Kaer Se and Asse, in Sach and Salach, in Lotor and Fotor, and I have been in India the Great and India the Lesser, and I have also been in Europe and Africa, and in the islands of Corsica, and I was present when thou didst conquer Greece in the East. Nine

[1] The above is an exquisite specimen of Celtic poetry.

supreme sovereigns, handsome men, saw we there, but never did I behold a man of equal dignity with him who is now at the door of the portal." Then said Arthur: "If walking thou didst enter here, return thou running. It is unbecoming to keep such a man as thou sayest he is in the wind and the rain." Said Kay: "By the hand of my friend, if thou wouldst follow my counsel, thou wouldst not break through the laws of the court because of him." "Not so, blessed Kay," said Arthur; "it is an honor to us to be resorted to, and the greater our courtesy, the greater will be our renown and our fame and our glory."

And Glewlwyd came to the gate, and opened the gate before Kilwich; and although all dismounted upon the horse-block at the gate, yet did he not dismount, but he rode in upon his charger. Then said he, "Greeting be unto thee, sovereign ruler of this island, and be this greeting no less unto the lowest than unto the highest, and be it equally unto thy guests, and thy warriors, and thy chieftains; let all partake of it as completely as thyself. And complete be thy favor, and thy fame, and thy glory, throughout all this island." "Greeting unto thee also," said Arthur; "sit thou between two of my warriors, and thou shalt have minstrels before thee, and thou shalt enjoy the privileges of a king born to a throne, as long as thou remainest here. And when I dispense my presents to the visitors and strangers in this court, they shall be in thy hand at my commencing." Said the youth, "I came not here to consume meat and drink; but if I obtain the boon that I seek, I will requite it thee, and extol thee; but if I have it not, I will bear forth thy dispraise to the four quarters of the world, as far as thy renown has extended." Then said Arthur, "Since thou wilt not remain here, chieftain, thou shalt receive the boon, whatsoever thy tongue may name, as far as the wind dries, and the rain moistens, and the sun revolves, and the sea encircles, and the earth extends; save only my ship Prydwen, and my mantle, and Caleburn, my sword, and Rhongomyant, my lance, and Guinevere, my wife. By the truth of Heaven, thou shalt have it cheerfully, name what thou wilt." "I would that thou bless my hair," said he. "That shall be granted thee."

And Arthur took a golden comb, and scissors whereof the loops were of silver, and he combed his hair. And Arthur in-

quired of him who he was; "for my heart warms unto thee, and I know that thou art come of my blood. Tell me, therefore, who thou art." "I will tell thee," said the youth. "I am Kilwich, the son of Kilydd, the son of Prince Kelyddon, by Goleudyd my mother, the daughter of Prince Anlawd." "That is true," said Arthur; "thou art my cousin. Whatsoever boon thou mayest ask, thou shalt receive, be it what it may that thy tongue shall name." "Pledge the truth of Heaven and the faith of thy kingdom thereof." "I pledge it thee gladly." "I crave of thee, then, that thou obtain for me Olwen, the daughter of Yspadaden Penkawr, to wife; and this boon I likewise seek at the hands of thy warriors.

"Olwen of slender eyebrow, pure of heart."—BRWYNOG.

And the majestic maiden, Creiddylad,[1] the daughter of Lludd, the constant maiden, and Ewaedan, the daughter of Kynvelyn,[2] the half-man." All these did Kilwich, the son of Kilydd, adjure to obtain his boon.

Then said Arthur, "O chieftain, I have never heard of the maiden of whom thou speakest, nor of her kindred, but I will gladly send messengers in search of her. Give me time to seek her." And the youth said, "I will willingly grant from this night to that at the end of the year to do so." Then Arthur sent messengers to every land within his dominions to seek for the maiden, and at the end of the year Arthur's messengers

[1] Creiddylad is no other than Shakespeare's Cordelia, whose father, King Lear, is by the Welsh authorities called indiscriminately Llyr or Lludd. All the old chroniclers give the story of her devotion to her aged parent, but none of them seem to have been aware that she is destined to remain with him till the day of doom, whilst Gwyn ap Nudd, the king of the fairies, and Gwythyr ap Greidiol, fight for her every first of May, and whichever of them may be fortunate enough to be the conqueror at that time will obtain her as his bride.

[2] The Welsh have a fable on the subject of the half-man, taken to be illustrative of the force of habit. In this allegory Arthur is supposed to be met by a sprite, who appears at first in a small and indistinct form, but who, on approaching nearer, increases in size, and, assuming the semblance of half a man, endeavors to provoke the king to wrestle. Despising his weakness, and considering that he should gain no credit by the encounter, Arthur refuses to do so, and delays the contest until at length the half-man (Habit) becomes so strong that it requires his utmost efforts to overcome him.

returned without having gained any knowledge or intelligence concerning Olwen, more than on the first day. Then said Kilwich, "Every one has received his boon, and I yet lack mine. I will depart, and bear away thy honor with me." Then said Kay, "Rash chieftain! dost thou reproach Arthur? Go with us, and we will not part until thou dost either confess that the maiden exists not in the world, or until we obtain her." Thereupon Kay rose up. And Arthur called Bedwyr, who never shrank from any enterprise upon which Kay was bound. None were equal to him in swiftness throughout this island, except Arthur alone; and although he was one-handed, three warriors could not shed blood faster than he on the field of battle.

And Arthur called to Kyndelig, the guide, "Go thou upon this expedition with the chieftain." For as good a guide was he in a land which he had never seen as he was in his own.

He called Gurhyr Gwalstat, because he knew all tongues.

He called Gawain, the son of Gwyar, because he never returned home without achieving the adventure of which he went in quest.

And Arthur called Meneu, the son of Teirgwed, in order that, if they went into a savage country, he might cast a charm and an illusion over them, so that none might see them whilst they could see every one.

They journeyed until they came to a vast open plain, wherein they saw a great castle, which was the fairest of the castles of the world. And when they came before the castle, they beheld a vast flock of sheep. And upon the top of a mound there was a herdsman keeping the sheep. And a rug made of skins was upon him, and by his side was a shaggy mastiff, larger than a steed nine winters old.

Then said Kay, "Gurhyr Gwalstat, go thou and salute yonder man." "Kay," said he, "I engaged not to go further than thou thyself." "Let us go then together," answered Kay. Said Meneu, "Fear not to go thither, for I will cast a spell upon the dog, so that he shall injure no one." And they went up to the mound whereon the herdsman was, and they said to him, "How dost thou fare, herdsman?" "Not less fair be it to you than to me." "Whose are the sheep that thou dost keep, and to whom does yonder castle belong?" "Stupid are ye, truly! not to know

that this is the castle of Yspadaden Penkawr. And ye also, who are ye?" "We are an embassy from Arthur, come to seek Olwen, the daughter of Yspadaden Penkawr." "O men! the mercy of Heaven be upon you; do not that for all the world. None who ever came hither on this quest has returned alive." And the herdsman rose up. And as he rose Kilwich gave unto him a ring of gold. And he went home and gave the ring to his spouse to keep. And she took the ring when it was given her, and she said, "Whence came this ring? for thou art not wont to have good fortune." "O wife, him to whom this ring belonged thou shalt see here this evening." "And who is he?" asked the woman. "Kilwich, the son of Kilydd, by Goleudid, the daughter of Prince Anlawd, who is come to seek Olwen as his wife." And when she heard that, she had joy that her nephew, the son of her sister, was coming to her, and sorrow, because she had never known any one depart alive who had come on that quest.

And the men went forward to the gate of the herdsman's dwelling. And when she heard their footsteps approaching, she ran out with joy to meet them. And Kay snatched a billet out of the pile. And when she met them, she sought to throw her arms about their necks. And Kay placed the log between her two hands, and she squeezed it so that it became a twisted coil. "O woman," said Kay, "if thou hadst squeezed me thus, none could ever again have set their affections on me. Evil love were this." They entered into the house and were served; and soon after, they all went forth to amuse themselves. Then the woman opened a stone chest that was before the chimney-corner, and out of it arose a youth with yellow, curling hair. Said Gurhyr, "It is a pity to hide this youth. I know that it is not his own crime that is thus visited upon him." "This is but a remnant," said the woman. "Three and twenty of my sons has Yspadaden Penkawr slain, and I have no more hope of this one than of the others." Then said Kay, "Let him come and be a companion with me, and he shall not be slain unless I also am slain with him." And they ate. And the woman asked them, "Upon what errand come you here?" "We come to seek Olwen for this youth." Then said the woman, "In the name of Heaven, since no one from the castle hath yet seen you,

return again whence you came." "Heaven is our witness that we will not return until we have seen the maiden. Does she ever come hither, so that she may be seen?" "She comes here every Saturday to wash her head, and in the vessel where she washes she leaves all her rings, and she never either comes herself or sends any messengers to fetch them." "Will she come here if she is sent to?" "Heaven knows that I will not destroy my soul, nor will I betray those that trust me; unless you will pledge me your faith that you will not harm her, I will not send to her." "We pledge it," said they. So a message was sent, and she came.

The maiden was clothed in a robe of flame-colored silk, and about her neck was a collar of ruddy gold, on which were precious emeralds and rubies. More yellow was her head than the flower of the broom,[1] and her skin was whiter than the foam of the wave, and fairer were her hands and her fingers than the blossoms of the wood-anemone amidst the spray of the meadow fountain. The eye of the trained hawk was not brighter than hers. Her bosom was more snowy than the breast of the white swan, her cheek was redder than the reddest roses. Whoso beheld her was filled with her love. Four white trefoils sprung up wherever she trod. And therefore was she called Olwen.

She entered the house and sat beside Kilwich upon the foremost bench; and as soon as he saw her, he knew her. And Kilwich said unto her, "Ah! maiden, thou art she whom I have loved; come away with me, lest they speak evil of thee and of me. Many a day have I loved thee." "I cannot do this, for I have pledged my faith to my father not to go without his counsel, for his life will last only until the time of my espousal. Whatever is to be, must be. But I will give thee advice, if thou wilt take it. Go, ask me of my father, and that which he shall require of thee, grant it, and thou wilt obtain me; but if thou deny him anything, thou wilt not obtain me, and it will be

[1] The romancers dwell with great complacency on the fair hair and delicate complexion of their heroines. This taste continued for a long time, and to render the hair light was an object of education. Even when wigs came into fashion they were all flaxen. Such was the color of the hair of the Gauls and of their German conquerors. It required some centuries to reconcile their eyes to the swarthy beauties of their Spanish and Italian neighbors.

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well for thee if thou escape with thy life." "I promise all this, if occasion offer," said he.

She returned to her chamber, and they all rose up, and followed her to the castle. And they slew the nine porters, that were at the nine gates, in silence. And they slew the nine watch-dogs without one of them barking. And they went forward to the hall.

"The greeting of Heaven and of man be unto thee, Yspadaden Penkawr," said they. "And you, wherefore come you?" "We come to ask thy daughter Olwen for Kilwich, the son of Kilydd, the son of Prince Kelyddon." "Where are my pages and my servants? Raise up the forks beneath my two eyebrows, which have fallen over my eyes, that I may see the fashion of my son-in-law." And they did so. "Come hither to-morrow, and you shall have an answer."

They rose to go forth, and Yspadaden Penkawr seized one of the three poisoned darts that lay beside him, and threw it after them. And Bedwyr caught it, and flung it, and pierced Yspadaden Penkawr grievously with it through the knee. Then he said, "A cursed ungentle son-in-law, truly! I shall ever walk the worse for his rudeness, and shall ever be without a cure. This poisoned iron pains me like the bite of a gad-fly. Cursed be the smith who forged it, and the anvil on which it was wrought! So sharp is it!"

That night also they took up their abode in the house of the herdsman. The next day, with the dawn, they arrayed themselves and proceeded to the castle, and entered the hall, and they said, "Yspadaden Benkawr, give us thy daughter in consideration of her dower and her maiden fee, which we will pay to thee, and to her two kinswomen likewise." Then he said, "Her four great-grandmothers and her four great-grandsires are yet alive; it is needful that I take counsel of them." "Be it so," they answered, "we will go to meat." As they rose up he took the second dart that was beside him, and cast it after them. And Meneu, the son of Gawedd, caught it, and flung it back at him, and wounded him in the centre of the breast. "A cursed ungentle son-in-law, truly!" said he; "the hard iron pains me like the bite of a horse-leech. Cursed be the hearth whereon it was heated, and the smith who formed it! So sharp

is it! Henceforth, whenever I go up hill, I shall have a scant in my breath, and a pain in my chest, and I shall often loathe my food." And they went to meat.

And the third day they returned to the palace. And Yspadaden Penkawr said to them, "Shoot not at me again unless you desire death. Where are my attendants? Lift up the forks of my eyebrows, which have fallen over my eyeballs, that I may see the fashion of my son-in-law." Then they arose, and, as they did so, Yspadaden Penkawr took the third poisoned dart and cast it at them. And Kilwich caught it, and threw it vigorously, and wounded him through the eyeball. "A cursed ungentle son-in-law, truly! As long as I remain alive, my eye-sight will be the worse. Whenever I go against the wind, my eyes will water; and peradventure my head will burn, and I shall have a giddiness every new moon. Like the bite of a mad dog is the stroke of this poisoned iron. Cursed be the fire in which it was forged!" And they went to meat.

And the next day they came again to the palace, and they said, "Shoot not at us any more, unless thou desirest such hurt and harm and torture as thou now hast, and even more." Said Kilwich, "Give me thy daughter; and if thou wilt not give her, thou shalt receive thy death because of her." "Where is he that seeks my daughter? Come hither where I may see thee." And they placed him a chair face to face with him.

Then said Yspadaden Penkawr, "Is it thou that seekest my daughter?"

"It is I," answered Kilwich.

"I must have thy pledge that thou wilt not do toward me otherwise than is just; and when I have gotten that which I shall name, my daughter thou shalt have."

"I promise thee that, willingly," said Kilwich; "name what thou wilt."

"I will do so," said he. "Seest thou yonder red tilled ground?"

"I see it."

"When first I met the mother of this maiden, nine bushels of flax were sown therein, and none has yet sprung up, white nor black. I require to have the flax to sow in the new land

yonder, that when it grows up it may make a white wimple for my daughter's head on the day of thy wedding."

"It will be easy for me to compass this, although thou mayest think it will not be easy."

"Though thou get this, there is yet that which thou wilt not get—the harp of Teirtu, to play to us that night. When a man desires that it should play, it does so of itself; and when he desires that it should cease, it ceases. And this he will not give of his own free will, and thou wilt not be able to compel him."

"It will be easy for me to compass this, although thou mayest think that it will not be easy."

"Though thou get this, there is yet that which thou wilt not get. I require thee to get me for my huntsman Mabon, the son of Modron. He was taken from his mother when three nights old, and it is not known where he now is, nor whether he is living or dead."

"It will be easy for me to compass this, although thou mayest think it will not be easy."

"Though thou get this, there is yet that which thou wilt not get,—the two cubs of the wolf Gast Rhymhi; no leash in the world will hold them but a leash made from the beard of Dillus Varwawc, the robber. And the leash will be of no avail unless it be plucked from his beard while he is alive. While he lives, he will not suffer this to be done to him, and the leash will be of no use should he be dead, because it will be brittle."

"It will be easy for me to compass this, although thou mayest think it will not be easy."

"Though thou get this, there is yet that which thou wilt not get,—the sword of Gwernach the Giant; of his own free will he will not give it, and thou wilt never be able to compel him."

"It will be easy for me to compass this, although thou mayest think it will not be easy."

"Though thou get this, there is yet that which thou wilt not get. Difficulties shalt thou meet with, and nights without sleep, in seeking this, and if thou obtain it not, neither shalt thou obtain my daughter."

"Horses shall I have, and chivalry; and my lord and kins-

man, Arthur, will obtain for me all these things. And I shall gain thy daughter, and thou shalt lose thy life."

"Go forward. And thou shalt not be chargeable for food or raiment for my daughter while thou art seeking these things; and when thou hast compassed all these marvels, thou shalt have my daughter for thy wife."

The Black Knight.

CHAPTER XII.

Kil'wich and Ol'wen (Continued)—The Salmon.

All that day they journeyed until the evening, and then they beheld a vast castle, which was the largest in the world. And lo! a black knight mounted upon a black horse came out from the castle. And they spoke unto him, and said, "O man, whose castle is that?" "Stupid are ye, truly, O men! There is no one in the world that does not know that this is the castle of Gwernach the Giant." "What treatment is there for guests and strangers that alight in that castle?" "O chieftain, Heaven protect thee! No guest ever returned thence alive, and no one may enter therein unless he brings with him his craft."

Then they proceeded towards the gate. Said Gurhyr Gwalstat, "Is there a porter?" "There is; wherefore dost thou call?" "Open the gate." "I will not open it." "Wherefore wilt thou not?" "The knife is in the meat, and the drink is in the horn, and there is revelry in the hall of Gwernach the Giant; and except for a craftsman who brings his craft, the gate will not be opened to-night." "Verily, porter," then said Kay, "my craft bring I with me." "What is thy craft?" "The best burnisher of swords am I in the world." "I will go and tell this unto Gwernach the Giant, and I will bring thee an answer."

So the porter went in, and Gwernach said to him, "Hast thou news from the gate?" "I have. There is a party at the door of the gate who desire to come in." "Didst thou inquire of

them if they possessed any art?" "I did inquire," said he, "and one told me that he was well skilled in the burnishing of swords." "We have need of him then. For some time have I sought for some one to polish my sword, and could find no one. Let this man enter, since he brings with him his craft."

The porter thereupon returned and opened the gate. And Kay went in by himself, and he saluted Gwernach the Giant. And a chair was placed for him opposite to Gwernach. And Gwernach said to him, "O man, is it true that is reported of thee, that thou knowest how to burnish swords?" "I know full well how to do so," answered Kay. Then was the sword of Gwernach brought to him. And Kay took a blue whetstone from under his arm, and asked whether he would have it burnished white or blue. "Do with it as it seems good to thee, or as thou wouldst if it were thine own." Then Kay polished one-half of the blade, and put it in his hand. "Will this please thee?" asked he. "I would rather than all that is in my dominions that the whole of it were like this. It is a marvel to me that such a man as thou should be without a companion." "O noble sir, I have a companion, albeit he is not skilled in this art." "Who may he be?" "Let the porter go forth, and I will tell him whereby he may know him. The head of his lance will leave its shaft, and draw blood from the wind, and will descend upon its shaft again." Then the gate was opened, and Bedwyr entered. And Kay said, "Bedwyr is very skilful, though he knows not this art."

And there was much discourse among those who were without, because that Kay and Bedwyr had gone in. And a young man who was with them, the only son of the herdsman, got in also; and he contrived to admit all the rest, but they kept themselves concealed.

The sword was now polished, and Kay gave it unto the hand of Gwernach the Giant, to see if he were pleased with his work. And the giant said, "The work is good; I am content therewith." Said Kay, "It is thy scabbard that hath rusted thy sword; give it to me, that I may take out the wooden sides of it, and put in new ones." And he took the scabbard from him, and the sword in the other hand. And he came and stood over

against the giant, as if he would have put the sword into the scabbard; and with it he struck at the head of the giant, and cut off his head at one blow. Then they despoiled the castle, and took from it what goods and jewels they would. And they returned to Arthur's court, bearing with them the sword of Gwernach the Giant.

And when they told Arthur how they had sped, Arthur said, "It is a good beginning." Then they took counsel, and said, "Which of these marvels will it be best for us to seek next?" "It will be best," said one, "to seek Mabon, the son of Modron; and he will not be found unless we first find Eidoel, the son of Aer, his kinsman." Then Arthur rose up, and the warriors of the island of Britain with him, to seek for Eidoel; and they proceeded until they came to the castle of Glivi, where Eidoel was imprisoned. Glivi stood on the summit of his castle, and he said, "Arthur, what requirest thou of me, since nothing remains to me in this fortress, and I have neither joy nor pleasure in it, neither wheat nor oats? Seek not, therefore, to do me harm." Said Arthur, "Not to injure thee came I hither, but to seek for the prisoner that is with thee." "I will give thee my prisoner, though I had not thought to give him up to any one, and therewith shalt thou have my support and my aid."

His followers said unto Arthur, "Lord, go thou home, thou canst not proceed with thy host in quest of such small adventures as these." Then said Arthur, "It were well for thee, Gurhyr Gwalstat, to go upon this quest, for thou knowest all languages, and art familiar with those of the birds and the beasts. Thou, Eidoel, oughtest likewise to go with thy men in search of thy cousin. And as for you, Kay and Bedwyr, I have hope of whatever adventure ye are in quest of, that ye will achieve it. Achieve ye this adventure for me."

They went forward until they came to the Ousel of Cilgwri. And Gurhyr adjured her, saying, "Tell me if thou knowest aught of Mabon, the son of Modron, who was taken when three nights old from between his mother and the wall?" And the Ousel answered, "When I first came here, there was a smith's anvil in this place, and I was then a young bird; and from that time no work has been done upon it, save the pecking of my

beak every evening; and now there is not so much as the size of a nut remaining thereof; yet during all that time I have never heard of the man for whom you inquire. Nevertheless, I will do that which it is fitting that I should for an embassy from Arthur. There is a race of animals who were formed before me, and I will be your guide to them."

So they proceeded to the place where was the Stag of Redynvre. "Stag of Redynvre, behold, we are come to thee, an embassy from Arthur, for we have not heard of any animal older than thou. Say, knowest thou aught of Mabon, the son of Modron, who was taken from his mother when three nights old?" The Stag said, "When first I came hither there was a plain all around me, without any trees save one oak sapling, which grew up to be an oak with an hundred branches; and that oak has since perished, so that now nothing remains of it but the withered stump; and from that day to this I have been here, yet have I never heard of the man for whom you inquire. Nevertheless, being an embassy from Arthur, I will be your guide to the place where there is an animal which was formed before I was, and the oldest animal in the world, and the one that has travelled most, the Eagle of Gwern Abwy."

Gurhyr said, "Eagle of Gwern Abwy, we have come to thee, an embassy from Arthur, to ask thee if thou knowest aught of Mabon, the son of Modron, who was taken from his mother when he was three nights old?" The Eagle said, "I have been here for a great space of time, and when I first came hither, there was a rock here from the top of which I pecked at the stars every evening; and it has crumbled away, and now it is not so much as a span high. All that time I have been here, and I have never heard of the man for whom you inquire, except once when I went in seach of food as far as Llyn Llyw. And when I came there, I struck my talons into a salmon, thinking he would serve me as food for a long time. But he drew me into the water, and I was scarcely able to escape from him. After that I made peace with him. And I drew fifty fish-spears out of his back, and relieved him. Unless he know something of him whom you seek, I cannot tell who may. However, I will guide you to the place where he is."

The Salmon.

So they went thither; and the Eagle said, "Salmon of Llyn Llyw, I have come to thee with an embasay from Arthur, to ask thee if thou knowest aught of Mabon, the son of Modron, who was taken away at three nights old from his mother." "As much as I know I will tell thee. With every tide I go along the river upward, until I come near to the walls of Gloucester, and there have I found such wrong as I never found elsewhere; and to the end that ye may give credence thereto, let one of you go thither upon each of my two shoulders." So Kay and Gurhyr Gwalstat went upon the two shoulders of the Salmon, and they proceeded until they came unto the wall of the prison; and they heard a great wailing and lamenting from the dungeon. Said Gurhyr, "Who is it that laments in this house of stone?" "Alas! it is Mabon, the son of Modron, who is here imprisoned; and no imprisonment was ever so grievous as mine." "Hast thou hope of being released for gold or for silver, or for any gifts of wealth, or through battle and fighting?" "By fighting will whatever I may gain be obtained."

Then they went thence, and returned to Arthur, and they told him where Mabon, the son of Modron, was imprisoned. And Arthur summoned the warriors of the island, and they journeyed as far as Gloucester, to the place where Mabon was in prison. Kay and Bedwyr went upon the shoulders of the fish, whilst the warriors of Arthur attacked the castle. And Kay broke through the wall into the dungeon, and brought away the prisoner upon his back, whilst the fight was going on between the warriors. And Arthur returned home, and Mabon with him at liberty.

On a certain day, as Gurhyr Gwalstat was walking over a mountain, he heard a wailing and a grievous cry. And when he heard it, he sprung forward and went towards it. And when he came there, he saw a fire burning among the turf, and an ant-hill nearly surrounded with the fire. And he drew his sword, and smote off the ant-hill close to the earth, so that it escaped being burned in the fire. And the ants said to him, "Receive from us the blessing of Heaven, and that which no man can give we will give thee." Then they fetched the nine bushels of flax-seed which Yspadaden Penkawr had required of Kilwich, and they brought the full measure, without lacking any, except

one flax-seed, and that the lame pismire brought in before night.

Then said Arthur, "Which of the marvels will it be best for us to seek next?" "It will be best to seek for the two cubs of the wolf Gast Rhymhi."

"Is it known," said Arthur, "where she is?" "She is in Aber Cleddyf," said one. Then Arthur went to the house of Tringad, in Aber Cleddyf, and he inquired of him whether he had heard of her there. "She has often slain my herds, and she is there below in a cave in Aber Cleddyf."

Then Arthur went in his ship Prydwen by sea, and the others went by land to hunt her. And they surrounded her and her two cubs, and took them, and carried them away.

As Kay and Bedwyr sat on a beacon-cairn on the summit of Plinlimmon, in the highest wind that ever was, they looked around them and saw a great smoke afar off. Then said Kay, "By the hand of my friend, yonder is the fire of a robber." Then they hastened towards the smoke, and they came so near to it that they could see Dillus Varwawc scorching a wild boar. "Behold, yonder is the greatest robber that ever fled from Arthur," said Bedwyr to Kay. "Dost thou know him?" "I do know him," answered Kay; "he is Dillus Varwawc, and no leash in the world will be able to hold the cubs of Gast Rhymhi save a leash made from the beard of him thou seest yonder. And even that will be useless unless his beard be plucked out alive with wooden tweezers; for if dead it will be brittle." "What thinkest thou that we should do concerning this?" said Bedwyr. "Let us suffer him," said Kay, "to eat as much as he will of the meat, and after that he will fall asleep." And during that time they employed themselves in making the wooden tweezers. And when Kay knew certainly that he was asleep, he made a pit under his feet, and he struck him a violent blow, and squeezed him into the pit. And there they twitched out his beard completely with the wooden tweezers, and after that they slew him altogether. And from thence they went, and took the leash made of Dillus Varwawc's beard, and they gave it into Arthur's hand.

Thus they got all the marvels that Yspadaden Penkawr had required of Kilwich; and they set forward, and took the mar-

vels to his court. And Kilwich said to Yspadaden Penkawr, "Is thy daughter mine now?" "She is thine," said he, "but therefore needest thou not thank me, but Arthur, who hath accomplished this for thee." Then Goreu, the son of Custennin, the herdsman, whose brothers Yspadaden Penkawr had slain, seized him by the hair of his head, and dragged him after him to the keep, and cut off his head, and placed it on a stake on the citadel. Then they took possession of his castle, and of his treasures. And that night Olwen became Kilwich's bride, and she continued to be his wife as long as she lived.

THE AGE OF CHIVALRY.

PART III.

LEGENDARY POETS AND POETRY.

From a Picture supposed to be sketched by Runciman. *Engraved by J. Heath.*

LEGENDARY POETS AND POETRY.

CHAPTER I.

Authorship of Ossian—History of the Controversy—Fingal—Cuchullin—The Landing of Swaran—The Council of the Chiefs—Council Advises Retreat—Cuchullin Decides to Attack—Deaths of Duchomar and Cathbat—Cuchullin's Chariot—The Battle—Cuchullin's Feast—The Story of Grudar and Brassolis.

Os'sian—Fin'gal.

Ossian was a Celtic bard who is supposed to have lived in the second or possibly the third century. His father was Fingal, a name famous in the ancient annals of both Scotland and Ireland. The original language of these people, from long disuse, became almost obsolete, and was only preserved through the oral traditions at the fireside. Sometime about the middle of the last century it was publicly stated by a Gaelic scholar that there still remained in the old Celtic language fragmentary relics of the most wonderful writings since the age of Homer.

A few years later Mr. James Macpherson, a gentleman of classical attainments but of the most ordinary poetic ability, issued a volume of poems which he claimed to have collected in the Highlands of Scotland. This gave rise to one of the most animated discussions in the history of literature.

The poems at once took rank among the most ancient classics. They were translated into the languages of Europe and read with admiration by Goethe, Schiller and Napoleon. The question was as to their authenticity. Some claimed, and among them Dr. Johnson, that they were the composition of Mr. Macpherson himself. The discussion transcended the bounds of legitimate criticism and became one of national importance. It was London against Edinburgh. Mr. Macpherson, being a man of dignity and spirit, naturally resented the aspersions cast upon his honor. He challenged his accusers to an investigation, which for some reason they declined. The question long remained an open one, but the more recent critics we believe generally concede the claim of antiquity which places Ossian among the first of our legendary poets.

The longer poems are supposed to occupy a day each. The day was usually given over to battle, while at night the opposing chiefs met and feasted. A bard was always present, who sang the glories of the Celtic wars. Such is the outline of Fingal, the longest and best known of the entire series.

Fin'gal.

Cuchullin sat by Tura's wall; by the tree of the rustling leaf. His spear leaned against the mossy rock. His shield lay by him on the grass. As he thought of mighty Cairbar,[1] a hero whom he slew in war, the scout of the ocean came,—Moran,[2] the son of Fithil.

"Rise," said the youth, "Cuchullin, rise; I see the ships of Swaran. Cuchullin, many are the foe: many the heroes of the dark-rolling sea."

"Moran!" replied the blue-eyed chief, "thou ever tremblest, son of Fithil. Thy fears have much increased the foe. Perhaps

[1] Cairbar, a strong man.

[2] Moran signifies many; and Fithil, or rather Fili, an inferior bard.

it is the king[1] of the lonely hills coming to aid me on green Ullin's plains."

"I saw their chief," says Moran, "tall as a rock of ice. His spear is like that blasted fir. His shield like the rising moon. He sat on a rock on the shore; his dark host rolled like clouds around him. Many, chief of men! I said, many are our hands of war. Well art thou named the Mighty Man, but many mighty men are seen from Tura's windy walls.

"He answered, like a wave on a rock, 'Who in this land appears like me? Heroes stand not in my presence; they fall to earth beneath my hand. None can meet Swaran in the fight but Fingal, king of stormy hills. Once we wrestled on the heath of Malmor,[2] and our heels overturned the wood. Rocks fell from their place; and rivulets, changing their course, fled murmuring from our strife. Three days we renewed our strife, and heroes stood at a distance and trembled. On the fourth, Fingal says that the king of the ocean fell; but Swaran says he stood. Let dark Cuchullin yield to him that is strong as the storms of Malmor.'"

"No!" replied the blue-eyed chief, "I will never yield to man! Dark Cuchullin shall be great or dead! Go, Fithil's son, and take my spear. Strike the sounding shield of Cabait.[3] It hangs at Tura's rustling gate; the sound of peace is not its voice. My heroes shall hear on the hill."

He went and struck the bossy shield. The hills and their rocks replied. The sound spread along the wood; deer start by the lake of roes. Curach[4] leapt from the sounding rock; and

[1] Fingal the son of Comhal and Morna the daughter of Thaddu. His grandfather was Trathal, and great-grandfather Trenmor, both of whom are often mentioned in the poem. Trenmor, according to tradition, had two sons; Trathal, who succeeded him in the kingdom of Morven, and Connar, called by the bards Conar the Great, who was elected king of all Ireland, and was the ancestor of that Cormac who sat on the Irish throne when the invasion of Swaran happened.

[2] Meal-mór, a great hill.

[3] Cabait, or rather Cathbait, grandfather to the hero, was so remarkable for his valor that his shield was made use of to alarm his posterity to the battles of the family. We find Fingal making the same use of his own shield. A horn was the most common instrument to call the army together, before the invention of bagpipes.

[4] Cu-raoch signifies the madness of battle.

Connal of the bloody spear. Crugal's breast of snow beats high. The son of Favi leaves the dark-brown hind. It is the shield of war, said Ronnar! the spear of Cuchullin, said Lugar! son of the sea put on thy arms! Calmar lift thy sounding steel! Puno! dreadful hero, rise! Cairbar from thy red tree of Cromla! Bend thy white knee, O Eth! and descend from the streams of Lena. Caolt, stretch thy white side as thou movest along the whistling heath of Mora: thy side that is white as the foam of the troubled sea, when the dark winds pour it on the murmuring rocks of Cuthon.[1]

Now I behold the chiefs, in the pride of their former deeds! Their souls are kindled at the battles of old; and the actions of other times. Their eyes are like flames of fire, and roll in search of the foes of the land. Their mighty hands are on their swords; and lightning pours from their sides of steel. They come like streams from the mountains; each rushes roaring from his hill. Bright are the chiefs of battle, in the armor of their fathers. Gloomy and dark their heroes follow, like the gathering of the rainy clouds behind the red meteors of heaven. The sounds of crashing arms ascend. The gray dogs howl between. Unequally bursts the song of battle; and rocking Cromla[2] echoes round. On Lena's dusky heath they stand, like mist that shades the hills of autumn: when broken and dark it settles high, and lifts its head to heaven!

"Hail," said Cuchullin, "sons of the narrow vales! hail, ye hunters of the deer! Another sport is drawing near: It is like the dark rolling of that wave on the coast! Shall we fight, ye sons of war! or yield green Innisfail[3] to Lochlin? O Connal[4] speak, thou first of men! thou breaker of the shields! thou hast often fought with Lochlin: wilt thou lift thy father's spear?"

"Cuchullin!" calm the chief replied, "the spear of Connal

[1] Cu-thón, the mournful sound of waves.

[2] Crom-leach signified a place of worship among the Druids. It is here the proper name of a hill on the coast of Ullin or Ulster.

[3] Ireland, so-called from a colony that settled there called Falans. Innisfail, *i. e.*, the island of the Fa-il or Falans.

[4] Connal, the friend of Cuchullin, was the son of Cathbait, prince of Tongorma, or the island of blue waves, probably one of the Hebrides.

is keen. It delights to shine in battle, and to mix with the blood of thousands. But though my hand is bent on war, my heart is for the peace of Erin.[1] Behold, thou first in Cormac's war, the sable fleet of Swaran. His masts are as numerous on our coast as reeds in the lake of Lego. His ships are like forests clothed with mist, when the trees yield by turns to the squally wind. Many are his chiefs in battle. Connal is for peace! Fingal would shun his arm the first of mortal men! Fingal who scatters the mighty, as stormy winds the heath; when the streams roar through echoing Cona, and night settles with all her clouds on the hill!"

"Fly, thou chief of peace," said Calmar,[2] the son of Matha; "fly, Connal, to thy silent hills, where the spear of battle never shone! Pursue the dark-brown deer of Cromla, and stop with thine arrows the bounding roes of Lena. But, blue-eyed son of Semo, Cuchullin, ruler of the war, scatter thou the sons of Lochlin![3] and roar through the ranks of their pride. Let no vessel of the kingdom of Snow bound on the dark-rolling waves of Inistore.[4] O ye dark winds of Erin rise! roar ye whirlwinds of the heath! Amidst the tempest let me die, torn in a cloud by angry ghosts of men; amidst the tempest let Calmar die, if ever chase was sport to him, so much as the battle of shields!"

"Calmar!" slow replied the chief, "I never fled, O son of Matha! I was swift with my friends in battle; but small is the fame of Connal! The battle was won in my presence; and the valiant overcame! But, son of Semo, hear my voice, regard the ancient throne of Cormac. Give wealth and half the land for peace, till Fingal come with battle. Or, if war be thy choice, I lift the sword and spear. My joy shall be in the midst of thousands, and my soul brighten in the gloom of the fight!"

[1] Erin, a name of Ireland; from ear or iar, west, and in, an island. This name was not always confined to Ireland, for there is the highest probability that the *Ierne* of the ancients was Britain to the north of the Forth. For Ierne is said to be to the north of Britain, which could not be meant of Ireland.

[2] Cálm-er, a strong man.

[3] The Galic name of Scandinavia in general; in a more confined sense, that of the peninsula of Jutland.

[4] Inistore, the island of whales, the ancient name of the Orkney islands.

"To me," Cuchullin replies, "pleasant is the noise of arms! pleasant as the thunder of heaven before the shower of spring! But gather all the shining tribes, that I may view the sons of war! Let them move along the heath, bright as the sunshine before a storm; when the west wind collects the clouds, and the oaks of Morven echo along the shore.

"But where are my friends in battle? the companions of my arm in danger? Where art thou, white-bosomed Câthbat? Where is that cloud in war, Duchômar?[1] And hast thou left me, O Fergus! in the day of the storm? Fergus, first in our joy at the feast! son of Rossa! arm of death! comest thou like a roe from Malmor? Like a hart from the echoing hills? Hail, thou son of Rossa! What shades the soul of war?"

"Four stones,"[2] replied the chief, "rise on the grave of Câthbat! These hands have laid in earth Duchômar, that cloud in war! Câthbat, son of Torman! thou wert a sunbeam on the hill. And thou, O valiant Duchômar, like the mist of marshy Lano; when it falls over the plains of autumn and brings death to the people. Morna, fairest of maids! calm is thy sleep in the cave of the rock. Thou hast fallen in darkness like a star, that shoots across the desert, when the traveller is alone, and mourns the transient beam."

"Say," said Semo's blue-eyed son, "say how fell the chiefs of Erin? Fell they by the sons of Lochlin, striving in the battle of heroes? Or what confines the chiefs of Cromla to the dark and narrow house?"

"Câthbat," replied the hero, "fell by the sword of Duchômar at the oak of the noisy streams. Duchômar came to Tura's cave, and spoke to the lovely Morna:

"'Morna,[3] fairest among women, lovely daughter of Cormac-

[1] Duchomar, a black, well-shaped man.

[2] This passage alludes to the manner of burial among the ancient Scots. They opened a grave six or eight feet deep: the bottom was lined with fine clay; and on this they laid the body of the deceased, and, if a warrior, his sword, and the heads of twelve arrows by his side. Above they laid another stratum of clay, in which they placed the horn of a deer, the symbol of hunting. The whole was covered with a fine mold, and four stones placed on end to mark the extent of the grave. These are the four stones alluded to here.

[3] Muirne, or Morna, a woman beloved by all.

cairbar. Why in the circle of stones; in the cave of the rock alone? The stream murmurs hoarsely. The old trees groan in the wind. The lake is troubled before thee, and dark are the clouds of the sky. But thou art like snow on the heath; and thy hair like the mist of Cromla when it curls on the rocks, and shines to the beam of the weft. Thy breasts are like two smooth rocks, seen from Brano of the streams; thy arms like two white pillars in the halls of the mighty Fingal.'

"'From whence,' the white-armed maid replied, 'from whence, Duchômar, the most gloomy of men? Dark are thy brows and terrible. Red are thy rolling eyes. Does Swaran appear on the sea? What of the foe, Duchômar?'

"'From the hill I return, O Morna, from the hill of the dark-brown hinds. Three have I slain with my bended yew. Three with my long-bounding dogs of the chase. Lovely daughter of Cormac, I love thee as my soul. I have slain one stately deer for thee. High was his branchy head; and fleet his feet of wind.'

"'Duchômar!' calm the maid replied, 'I love thee not, thou gloomy man; hard is thy heart of rock, and dark thy terrible brow. But Câthbat, son of Torman,[1] thou art the love of Morna. Thou art like a sunbeam on the hill in the day of the gloomy storm. Sawest thou the son of Torman, lovely on the hill of his hinds? Here the daughter of Cormac waits the coming of Câthbat.'

"'And long shall Morna wait,' Duchômar said; 'his blood is on my sword. Long shall Morna wait for him. He fell at Branno's stream. High on Cromla I will raise his tomb, daughter of Cormac-cairbar; but fix thy love on Duchômar; his arm is strong as a storm.'

"'And is the son of Torman fallen?' said the maid of the tearful eye. 'Is he fallen on his echoing heath; the youth with the breast of snow? he that was first in the chase of the hill; the foe of the strangers of the ocean. Duchômar thou art dark indeed, and cruel is thy arm to Morna. But give me that sword, my foe! I love the blood of Câthbat.'

"He gave the sword to her tears. But she pierced his manly

[1] Torman, thunder. This is the true origin of the Jupiter Taramis of the ancients.

breast! He fell, like the bank of a mountain-stream, and stretching out his arm he said:

"'Daughter of Cormac-cairbar, thou hast slain Duchômar. The sword is cold in my breast: Morna, I feel it cold. Give me to Moina the maid; Duchômar was the dream of her night. She will raise my tomb; and the hunter shall see it and praise me. But draw the sword from my breast; Morna, the steel is cold.' She came, in all her tears, she came, and drew it from his breast. He pierced her white side with steel; and spread her fair locks on the ground. Her bursting blood sounds from her side, and her white arm is stained with red. Rolling in death she lay, and Tura's cave answered to her groans."

"'Peace,' said Cuchullin, 'to the souls of the heroes; their deeds were great in danger. Let them ride around[1] me on clouds; and show their features of war; that my soul may be strong in danger; my arm like the thunder of heaven. But be thou on a moonbeam, O Morna! near the window of my rest; when my thoughts are of peace; and the din of arms is over. Gather the strength of the tribes, and move to the wars of Erin. Attend the car of my battles; rejoice in the noise of my course. Place three spears by my side; follow the bounding of my steeds; that my soul may be strong in my friends, when the battle darkens round the beams of my steel!'"

As rushes a stream of foam from the dark shady steep of Cromla; when the thunder is rolling above, and dark-brown night rests on half the hill. So fierce, so vast, so terrible rushed on the sons of Erin. The chief like a whale of ocean, whom all his billows follow, poured valor forth as a stream, rolling his might along the shore.

As when a stream of foam down headlong sweeps
From airy Cromla's black impending steeps,
While thunders war above in broken peals,
And half the hill the shading night conceals,
At intervals appear the awful forms
Of passing ghosts dim riding on the storms,

[1] It was the opinion then, as indeed it is to this day, of some of the Highlanders, that the souls of the deceased hovered round their living friends, and sometimes appeared to them when they were about to enter on any great undertaking.

The signal given ; thus terrible and strong
The sons of Erin move with shouts along.
—Cameron's Ossian.

The sons of Lochlin heard the noise as the sound of a winter-stream. Swaran struck his bossy shield, and called the son of Arno.

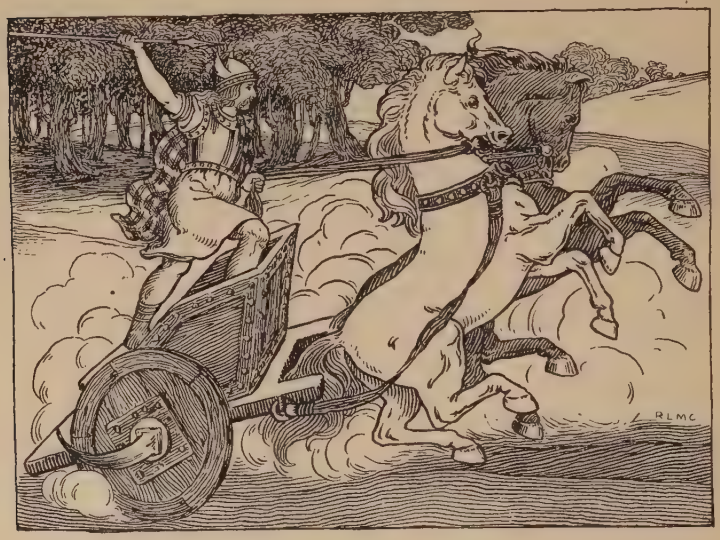
"What murmur rolls along the hill like the gathered flies of evening? The sons of Innisfail descend, or rustling winds roar in the distant wood. Such is the noise of Gormal before the white tops of my waves arise. O son of Arno, ascend the hill and view the dark face of the heath."

He went, and trembling, swift returned. His eyes rolled wildly round. His heart beat high against his side. His words were faltering, broken, slow :

"Rise, son of ocean, rise chief of the dark-brown shields. I see the dark, the mountain-stream of the battle : the deep-moving strength of the sons of Erin. The car, the car of battle comes, like the flame of death ; the rapid car of Cuchullin, the noble son of Semo. It bends behind like a wave near a rock ; like the golden mist of the heath. Its sides are embossed with stones, and sparkle like the sea round the boat of night. Of polished yew is its beam, and its seat of the smoothest bone. The sides are replenished with spears ; and the bottom is the footstool of heroes. Before the right side of the car is seen the snorting horse. The high-maned, broad-breasted, proud, high-leaping, strong steed of the hill. Loud and resounding is his hoof ; the spreading of his mane above is like that stream of smoke on the heath. Bright are the sides of the steed, and his name is Sulin-Sifadda.

"Before the left side of the car is seen the snorting horse. The dark maned, high-headed, strong-hoofed, fleet, bounding son of the hill : his name is Dunsronnal among the stormy sons of the sword. A thousand thongs bind the car on high. Hard polished bits shine in a wreath of foam. Thin thongs bright-studded with gems, bend on the stately necks of the steeds. The steeds that like wreaths of mist fly over the streamy vales. The wildness of deer is in their course, the strength of the eagle descending on her prey. Their noise is like the blast of winter on the sides of the snow-headed Gormal.

"Within the car is seen the chief; the strong stormy son of the sword; the hero's name is Cuchullin, son of Semo king of shells. His red cheek is like my polished yew. The look of his blue-rolling eye is wide beneath the dark arch of his brow. His hair flies from his head like a flame, as bending forward he wields the spear. Fly, king of ocean, fly; he comes, like a storm along the streamy vale."



"Cuchullin in his chariot leads the way."

"When did I fly," replied the king, "from the battle of many spears? When did I fly, son of Arno, chief of the little soul? I met the storm of Gormal when the foam of my waves was high; I met the storm of the clouds and shall I fly from a hero? Were it Fingal himself my soul should not darken before him. Rise to the battle, my thousands; pour round me like the echoing main. Gather round the bright steel of your king; strong as the rocks of my land; that meet the storm with joy, and stretch their dark woods to the wind."

As autumn's dark storms pour from two echoing hills, towards each other approached the heroes. As two dark streams from

high rocks meet, and mix and roar on the plain; loud, rough and dark in battle meet Lochlin and Innisfail. Chief mixes his strokes with chief, and man with man; steel, clanging, sounded on steel, helmets are cleft on high. Blood bursts and smokes around. Strings twang on the polished yews. Darts rush along the sky. Spears fall like the circles of light that gild the stormy face of night.

As the troubled noise of the ocean when roll the waves on high: as the last peal of the thunder of heaven, such is the noise of battle. Though Cormac's hundred bards were there to give the war to song; feeble were the voices of a hundred bards to send the deaths to future times. For many were the falls of the heroes; and wide poured the blood of the valiant.

Mourn, ye sons of song, the death of the noble Sithallin. Let the sighs of Fiöna rise on the dark heaths of her lovely Ardan. They fell, like two hinds of the desert, by the hands of the mighty Swaran, when, in the midst of thousands he roared like the shrill spirit of a storm, that sits dim, on the clouds of Gormal, and enjoys the death of the mariner.

Nor slept thy hand by thy side, chief of the isle of mist;[1] many were the deaths of thine arm, Cuchullin, thou son of Semo. His sword was like the beam of heaven when it pierces the sons of the vale; when the people are blasted and fall, and all the hills are burning around. Dunsronnal snorted over the bodies of heroes, and Sifadda bathed his hoof in blood. The battle lay behind them as groves overturned on the desert of Cromla, when the blast had passed the heath laden with the spirits of night.

Weep on the rocks of roaring winds, O maid of Inistore![2] Bend thy fair head over the waves, thou fairer than the spirit of the hills, when it moves in a sunbeam at noon over the silence of Morven. He is fallen! thy youth is low; pale beneath the

[1] The Isle of Sky.

[2] The maid of Inistore was the daughter of Gorlo, king of Inistore or Orkney islands. Trenar was brother to the king of Iniscon, supposed to be one of the islands of Shetland. The Orkneys and Shetland were at that time subject to the king of Lochlin. We find that the dogs of Trenar are sensible at home of the death of their master, the very instant he is killed. It was the opinion of the times that the souls of heroes went immediately after death to the hills of their country, and the scenes they frequented the most happy time of their life. It was thought too that dogs and horses saw the ghosts of the deceased.

sword of Cuchullin. No more shall valor raise the youth to match the blood of kings. Trenar, lovely Trenar died, thou maid of Inistore. His gray dogs are howling at home, and see his passing ghost. His bow is in the hall unstrung. No sound is in the heath of his hinds.

As roll a thousand waves on a rock, so Swaran's host came on; as meets a rock a thousand waves, so Innisfail met Swaran. Death raises all his voices around, and mixes with the sound of their shields. Each hero is a pillar of darkness, and the sword a beam of fire in his hand. The field echoes from wing to wing, as a hundred hammers that rise by turns on the red son of the furnace.

Who are these on Lena's heath that are so gloomy and dark? Who are these like two clouds, and their swords like lightning above them? The little hills are troubled around, and the rocks tremble with all their moss. Who is it but Ocean's son, and the car-borne chief of Erin? Many are the anxious eyes of their friends, as they see them dim on the heath. Now night conceals the chiefs in her clouds, and ends the terrible fight.

It was on Cromla's shaggy side that Dorglas placed the deer, the early fortune of the chase, before the heroes left the hill. A hundred youths collect the heath; ten heroes blow the fire; three hundred choose the polished stones. The feast is smoking wide.

Cuchullin, chief of Erin's war, resumed his mighty soul. He stood upon his beamy spear and spoke to the son of songs; to Carril of other times, the gray-haired son of Kinsena: "Is this feast spread for me alone and the king of Lochlin on Ullin's shore, far from the deer of his hills and sounding halls of his feasts? Rise, Carril of other times, and carry my words to Swaran; tell him that came from the roaring of waters, that Cuchullin gives his feast. Here let him listen to the sound of my groves amidst the clouds of night. For cold and bleak the blustering winds rush over the foam of his seas. Here let him praise the trembling harp, and hear the songs of heroes."

Old Carril went, with softest voice, and called the king of dark-brown shields. "Rise from the skins of thy chase, rise, Swaran king of groves. Cuchullin gives the joy of shells; partake the feast of Erin's blue-eyed chief." He answered like the

sullen sound of Cromla before a storm. "Though all thy daughters, Innisfail, should extend their arms of snow; raise high the heavings of their breasts, and softly roll their eyes of love; yet, fixed as Lochlin's thousand rocks, here Swaran shall remain till morn, with the young beams of my east, shall light me to the death of Cuchullin. Pleasant to my ear is Lochlin's wind. It rushes over my seas. It speaks aloft in all my shrowds, and brings my green forests to my mind; the green forests of Gormal that often echoed to my winds, when my spear was red in the chase of the boar. Let dark Cuchullin yield to me the ancient throne of Cormac, or Erin's torrents shall show from their hill the red foam of the blood of his pride."

"Sad is the sound of Swaran's voice," said Carril of other times: "Sad to himself alone," said the blue-eyed son of Semo. "But, Carril, raise thy voice on high, and tell the deeds of other times. Send thou the night away in song, and give the joy of grief. For many heroes and maids of love have moved on Innisfail. And lovely are the songs of woe that are heard on Albion's rocks; when the noise of the chase is over, and the streams of Cona answer to the voice of Ossian."[1]

"In other days," Carril replies, "came the sons of Ocean to Erin. A thousand vessels bounded over the waves to Ullin's lovely plains. The sons of Innisfail arose to meet the race of dark-brown shields. Cairbar, first of men, was there, and Grudar, stately youth. Long had they strove for the spotted bull, that lowed on Golbun's echoing heath. Each claimed him as his own; and death was often at the point of their steel. Side by side the heroes fought, and the strangers of Ocean fled. Whose name was fairer on the hill than the name of Cairbar and Grudar? But ah! why ever lowed the bull on Golbun's echoing heath? They saw him leaping like the snow. The wrath of the chiefs returned.

"On Lubar's[2] grassy banks they fought, and Grudar, like a

[1] Ossian is the son of Fingal and author of the poem. One cannot but admire the address of the poet in putting his own praise so naturally into the mouth of Cuchullin. The Cona here mentioned is perhaps that small river that runs through Glenco in Argyleshire. One of the hills which environ that romantic valley in still called Scorna-fena, or the hill of Fingal's people.

[2] Lubar, a river in Ulster.

sunbeam, fell. Fierce Cairbar came to the vale of the echoing Tura, where Brassolis, fairest of his sisters, all alone raised the song of grief. She sung of the actions of Grudar, the youth of her secret soul. She mourned him in the field of blood; but still she hoped for his return. Her white bosom is seen from her robe, as the moon from the clouds of night. Her voice was softer than the harp to raise the song of grief. Her soul was fixed on Grudar; the secret look of her eye was his. When shalt thou come in thine arms, thou mighty in the war?

"'Take, Brassolis,' Cairbar came and said, 'take, Brassolis, this shield of blood. Fix it on high within my hall, the armor of my foe.' Her soft heart beat against her side. Distracted, pale, she flew. She found her youth in all his blood! she died on Cromla's heath. Here rests their dust, Cuchullin; and these two lonely yews, sprung from their tombs, wish to meet on high. Fair was Brassolis on the plain, and Grudar on the hill. The bard shall preserve their names, and repeat them to future times."

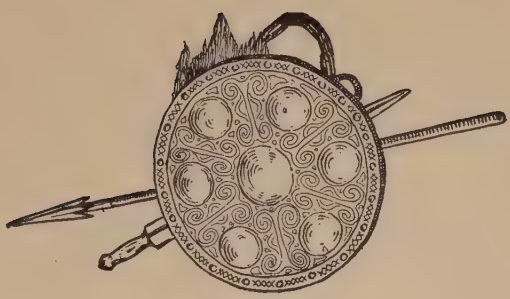
"Pleasant is thy voice, O Carril," said the blue-eyed chief of Erin. "Lovely are the words of other times. They are like the calm shower of spring, when the sun looks on the field, and the light cloud flies over the hills. O strike the harp in praise of my love, the lonely sunbeam of Dunscaich. Strike the harp in the praise of Bragéla, of her that I left in the isle of Mist, the spouse of Semo's son. Dost thou raise thy fair face from the rock to find the sails of Cuchullin? The sea is rolling far distant, and its white foam shall deceive thee for my sails. Retire, for it is night, my love, and the dark winds sigh in thy hair. Retire to the halls of my feasts, and think of the times that are past: for I will not return till the storm of war is ceased. O Connal, speak of wars and arms, and send her from my mind, for lovely with her raven-hair is the white bosomed daughter of Sorglan."

Connal, slow to speak, replied, "Guard against the race of Ocean. Send thy troop of night abroad, and watch the strength of Swaran. Cuchullin! I am for peace till the race of the desert come; till Fingal come the first of men, and beam, like the sun, on our fields."

The hero struck the shield of his alarms; the warriors of the

night moved on. The rest lay in the heath of the deer, and slept amidst the dusky wind. The ghosts[1] of the lately dead were near, and swam on gloomy clouds. And far distant, in the dark silence of Lena, the feeble voices were heard.

[1] It was long the opinion of the ancient Scots that a ghost was heard shrieking near the place where a death was to happen soon after. The accounts given to this day, among the vulgar, of this extraordinary matter, are very poetical. The ghost comes mounted on a meteor, and surrounds twice or thrice the place destined for the person to die, and then goes along the road through which the funeral is to pass, shrieking at intervals; at last, the meteor and ghost disappear above the burial-place.



CHAPTER II.

Connal—The Ghost of Crugal—The Battle—Flight of Grumal—The Fleet of Fingal—Cuchullin's Depression—The Story of Connal and Galvina.

CONNAL lay by the sound of the mountain stream, beneath the aged tree. A stone, with its moss, supported his head. Shrill through the heath of Lena, he heard the voice of night. At distance from the heroes he lay, for the son of the sword feared no foe.

My hero saw in his rest a dark-red stream of fire coming down from the hill. Crugal sat upon the beam, a chief that lately fell. He fell by the hand of Swaran, striving in the battle of heroes. His face is like the beam of the setting moon; his robes are of the clouds of the hill; his eyes are like two decaying flames. Dark is the wound of his breast.

"Crugal," said the mighty Connal, "son of Dedgal famed on the hill of the deer, why so pale and sad, thou breaker of the shields? Thou hast never been pale for fear. What disturbs the son of the hill?"

Dim, and in tears, he stood and stretched his pale hand over the hero. Faintly he raised his feeble voice, like the gale of the reedy Lego.

"My ghost, O Connal, is on my native hills; but my corse is on the sands of Ullin. Thou shalt never talk with Crugal, or

find his lone steps in the heath. I am light as the blast of Cromla, and I move like the shadow of mist. Connal, son of Colgar, I see the dark cloud of death: it hovers over the plains of Lena. The sons of green Erin shall fall. Remove from the field of ghosts." Like the darkened moon he retired, in the midst of the whistling blast.

"Stay," said the mighty Connal, "stay my dark-red friend. Lay by that beam of heaven, son of the windy Cromla. What cave of the hill is thy lonely house? What green-headed hill is the place of thy rest? Shall we not hear thee in the storm? In the noise of the mountain stream? When the feeble sons of the wind come forth, and ride on the blast of the desert?"

The soft-voiced Connal rose in the midst of his sounding arms. He struck his shield above Cuchullin. The son of battle waked.

"Why," said the ruler of the car, "comes Connal through the night? My spear might turn against the sound, and Cuchullin mourn the death of his friend. Speak, Connal, son of Colgar, speak, thy counsel is like the son of heaven."

"Son of Semo," replied the chief, "the ghost of Crugal came from the cave of his hill. The stars dim-twinkled through his form, and his voice was like the sound of a distant stream. He is a messenger of death. He speaks of the dark and narrow house. Sue for peace, O chief of Dunscaich, or fly over the heath of Lena."

"He spoke to Connal," replied the hero, "though stars dim-twinkled through his form. Son of Colgar, it was the wind that murmured in the caves of Lena. Or if it was the form[1] of Crugal, why didst thou not force him to my sight. Hast thou inquired where is his cave? The house of the son of the wind? My sword might find that voice, and force his knowledge from him. And small is his knowledge, Connal, for he was here to-day. He could not have gone beyond our hills, and who could tell him there of our death?"

[1] The poet teaches us the opinions that prevailed in his time concerning the state of separate souls. From Connal's expression, "That the stars dim-twinkled through the form of Crugal," and Cuchullin's reply, we may gather that they both thought the soul was material—something like the *εἰδωλον* of the ancient Greeks.

"Ghosts fly on clouds and ride on winds," said Connal's voice of wisdom. "They rest together in their caves, and talk of mortal men."

"Then let them talk of mortal men; of every man but Erin's chief. Let me be forgot in their cave; for I will not fly from Swaran. If I must fall, my tomb shall rise amidst the fame of future times. The hunter shall shed a tear on my stone, and sorrow dwell round the high-bosomed Bragéla. I fear not death, but I fear to fly, for Fingal saw me often victorious. Thou dim phantom of the hill, show thyself to me! come on thy beam of heaven, and show me my death in thine hand; yet will I not fly, thou feeble son of the wind.

"The boding threats of feeble ghosts above
Shall not Cuchullin from his purpose move
Who is determined, blame it as they may,
Still to oppose the monarch of the sea."
—CAMERON'S OSSIAN.

Go, son of Colgar, strike the shield of Caithbat, it hangs between the spears. Let my heroes rise to the sound in the midst of the battles of Erin. Though Fingal delays his coming with the race of the stormy hills, we shall fight, O Colgar's son, and die in the battle of heroes."

The sound spreads wide; the heroes rise, like the breaking of a blue-rolling wave. They stood on the heath, like oaks with all their branches round them; when they echo to the stream of frost, and their withered leaves rustle to the wind.

High Cromla's head of clouds is gray; the morning trembles on the half-enlightened ocean. The blue, gray mist swims slowly by, and hides the sons of Innisfail.

"Rise ye," said the king of the dark-brown shields, "ye that came from Lochlin's waves. The sons of Erin have fled from our arms—pursue them over the plains of Lena. And Morla, go to Cormac's hall and bid them yield to Swaran; before the people shall fall into the tomb; and the hills of Ullin be silent."

They rose like a flock of sea-fowl when the waves expel them from the shore. Their sound was like a thousand streams that meet in Cona's vale when, after a stormy night, they turn their dark eddies beneath the pale light of the morning.

As the dark shades of autumn fly over the hills of grass, so gloomy, dark, successive came the chiefs of Lochlin's echoing woods. Tall as the stag of Morven moved on the king of groves. His shining shield is on his side like a flame on the heath at night, when the world is silent and dark, and the traveller sees some ghost sporting in the beam.

A blast from the troubled ocean removed the settled mist. The sons of Innisfail appear like a ridge of rocks on the shore.

> "Now from the troubled main a blast dispelled
> The settled mist, and like a ridge of rocks
> The warlike sons of Innisfail appear."
> —SHACKLETON'S OSSIAN.

"Go, Morla, go," said Lochlan's king, "and offer peace to these. Offer the terms we give to kings when nations bow before us. When the valiant are dead in war, and the virgins weeping on the field."

Great Morla came, the son of Swart, and stately strode the king of shields. He spoke to Erin's blue-eyed son, among the lesser heroes.

"Take Swaran's peace," the warrior spoke, "the peace he gives to kings, when the nations bow before him. Leave Ullin's lovely plains to us, and give thy spouse and day. Thy spouse high-bosomed heaving fair. Thy dog that overtakes the wind. Give these to prove the weakness of thine arm, and live beneath our power."

"Tell Swaran, tell that heart of pride, that Cuchullin never yields. I give him the dark-blue rolling of ocean, or I give his people graves in Erin! Never shall a stranger have the lovely sunbeam of Dunscaich; nor ever deer fly on Lochlin's hills before the nimble-footed Luäth."

"Vain ruler of the car," said Morla, "wilt thou fight the king; that king whose ships of many groves could carry off thine Isle? So little is thy green-hilled Ullin to the king of stormy waves."

"In words I yield to many, Morla; but this sword shall yield to none. Erin shall own the sway of Cormac, while Connal and Cuchullin live. O Connal, first of mighty men, thou hast heard the words of Morla; shall thy thoughts then be of peace, thou breaker of the shields? Spirit of fallen Crugal!

why didst thou threaten us with death! The narrow house shall receive me in the midst of the light of renown. Exalt, ye sons of Innisfail, exalt the spear and bend the bow; rush on the foe in darkness, as the spirits of stormy nights."

Then dismal, roaring, fierce, and deep the gloom of battle rolled along; as mist that is poured on the valley, when storms invade the silent sunshine of heaven. The chief moves before in arms like an angry ghost before a cloud, when meteors inclose him with fire, and the dark winds are in his hand. Carril, far on the heath, bids the horn of battle sound. He raises the voice of the song, and pours his soul into the minds of heroes.

"Where," said the mouth of the song, "where is the fallen Crugal? He lies forgot on earth, and the hall of shells[1] is silent. Sad is the spouse of Crugal, for she is a stranger[2] in the hall of her sorrow. But who is she, that, like a sunbeam, flies before the ranks of the foe? It is Degrena,[3] lovely fair, the spouse of fallen Crugal. Her hair is on the wind behind. Her eye is red; her voice is shrill. Green, empty is thy Crugal now, his form is in the cave of the hill. He comes to the ear of rest, and raises his feeble voice; like the humming of the mountain-bee, or collected flies of evening. But Degrena falls like a cloud of the morn; the sword of Lochlin is in her side. Cairbar, she is fallen, the rising thought of thy youth. She is fallen, O Cairbar, the thought of thy youthful hours."

Fierce Cairbar heard the mournful sound, and rushed on like ocean's whale; he saw the death of his daughter; and roared in the midst of thousands. His spear met a son of Lochlin, and battle spread from wing to wing. As a hundred winds in Lochlin's groves, as fire in the firs of a hundred hills; so loud, so ruinous and vast the ranks of men are hewn down. Cuchullin cut off heroes like thistles, and Swaran wasted Erin. Curach fell by his hand, and Cairbar of the bossy shield. Morglan lies in lasting rest; and Caolt quivers as he dies. His white breast is stained with his blood, and his yellow hair stretched in the dust

[1] The ancient Scots, as well as the present Highlanders, drunk in shells; hence it is that we so often meet, in the old poetry, with the chief of shells, and the halls of shells.

[2] Crugal had married Degrena but a little time before the battle, consequently she may with propriety be called a stranger in the hall of her sorrow.

[3] Deo-grêna, a sunbeam.

of his native land. He often had spread the feast where he fell, and often raised the voice of the harp; when his dogs leapt around for joy, and the youths of the chase prepared the bow.

Still Swaran advanced, as a stream that bursts from the desert. The little hills are rolled in its course, and the rocks half-sunk by its side. But Cuchullin stood before him like a hill, that catches the clouds of heaven. The winds contend on its head of pines, and the hail rattles on its rocks. But firm in its strength, it stands and shades the silent vale of Cona.

So Cuchullin shaded the sons of Erin, and stood in the midst of thousands. Blood rises like the fount of a rock, from panting heroes around him. But Erin falls on either wing like snow in the day of the sun.

"O sons of Innisfail," said Grumal, "Lochlin conquers on the field. Why strive we as reeds against the wind! Fly to the hill of dark-brown hinds." He fled like the stag of Morven, and his spear is a trembling beam of light behind him. Few fled with Grumal, the chief of the little soul: they fell in the battle of heroes on Lena's echoing heath.

High on his car, of many gems, the chief of Erin stood; he slew a mighty son of Lochlin, and spoke, in haste, to Connal. "O Connal, first of mortal men, thou hast taught this arm of death! Though Erin's sons have fled, shall we not fight the foe? O Carril, son of other times, carry my living friends to that bushy hill. Here, Connal, let us stand like rocks, and save our flying friends."

Connal mounts the car of light. They stretch their shields like the darkened moon, the daughter of the starry skies, when she moves, a dun circle, through heaven. Sifadda panted up the hill, and Dunsronnal, haughty steed. Like waves behind a whale, behind them rushed the foe.

Now on the rising side of Cromla stood Erin's few sad sons, like a grove through which the flame had rushed, hurried on by the winds of the stormy night. Cuchullin stood beside an oak. He rolled his red eye in silence, and heard the wind in his bushy hair, when the scout of ocean came, Moran, the son of Fithil. "The ships," he cried, "the ships of the lonely isle! There Fingal comes, the first of men, the breaker of the shields.

'In silence near an oak Cuchullin stood,
His eye with red grief rolling and the wind
His bushy hair dishevelling, when appeared
The scout of the ocean, Moran, Fithil's son.
'Ships land,' he cried."
—SHACKLETON'S OSSIAN.

The waves foam before his black prows. His masts with sails are like groves in clouds."

"Blow," said Cuchullin, "all ye winds that rush over my isle of lovely mist. Come to the death of thousands, O chief of the hills of hinds. Thy sails, my friend, are to me like the clouds of the morning; and thy ships like the light of heaven; and thou thyself like a pillar of fire that giveth light in the night. O Connal, first of men, how pleasant are our friends! But the night is gathering around; where now are the ships of Fingal? Here let us pass the hours of darkness, and wish for the moon of heaven."

The winds came down on the woods. The torrents rushed from the rocks. Rain gathered round the head of Cromla; and the red stars trembled between the flying clouds. Sad, by the side of a stream whose sound was echoed by a tree, sad by the side of a stream the chief of Erin sat. Connal son of Colgar was there, and Carril of other times.

"Unhappy is the hand of Cuchullin," said the son of Semo, "unhappy is the hand of Cuchullin since he slew his friend. Ferda, thou son of Damman, I loved thee as myself."

"How, Cuchullin, son of Semo, fell the breaker of the shields? Well I remember," said Connal, "the noble son of Damman. Tall and fair he was, like the rainbow of the hill. Ferda from Albion came, the chief of a hundred hills. In Muri's[1] hall he learned the sword, and won the friendship of Cuchullin. We moved to the chase together; and one was our bed in the heath."

Deugala was the spouse of Cairbar, chief of the plains of Ullin. She was covered with the light of beauty, but her heart was the house of pride. She loved that sunbeam of youth, the noble son of Damman. "Cairbar," said the white-armed

[1] Muri, say the Irish bards, was an academy in Ulster for teaching the use of arms. The signification of the word is a cluster of people; which renders the opinion probable.

woman, "give me half of the herd. No more I will remain in your halls. Divide the herd, dark Cairbar."

"Let Cuchullin," said Cairbar, "divide my herd on the hill. His breast is the seat of justice. Depart, thou light of beauty." I went and divided the herd. One snow-white bull remained. I gave that bull to Cairbar. The wrath of Deugala rose.

"Son of Damman," begun the fair, "Cuchullin pains my soul. I must hear of his death, or Lubar's stream shall roll over me. My pale ghost shall wander near thee, and mourn the wound of my pride. Pour out the blood of Cuchullin or pierce this heaving breast."

"Deugala," said the fair-haired youth, "how shall I slay the son of Semo? He is the friend of my secret thoughts, and shall I lift the sword?" She wept three days before him; on the fourth he consented to fight.

"I will fight my friend, Deugala! but may I fall by his sword. Could I wander on the hill and behold the grave of Cuchullin?" We fought on the hills of Muri. Our swords avoid a wound. They slide on the helmets of steel; and sound on the slippery shields. Deugala was near with a smile, and said to the son of Damman: "Thine arm is feeble, thou sunbeam of youth. Thy years are not strong for steel. Yield to the son of Semo. He is like the rock of Malmor."

The tear is in the eye of youth. He, faltering, said to me: "Cuchullin, raise thy bossy shield. Defend thee from the hand of thy friend. My soul is laden with grief, for I must slay the chief of men."

I sighed as the wind in the chink of a rock. I lifted high the edge of my steel. The sunbeam of the battle fell; the first of Cuchullin's friends. Unhappy is the hand of Cuchullin since the hero fell.

"Mournful is thy tale, son of the car," said Carril of other times. "It sends my soul back to the ages of old, and to the days of other years. Often have I heard of Comal who slew the friend he loved; yet victory attended his steel; and the battle was consumed in his presence."

Comal was a son of Albion; the chief of an hundred hills. His deer drunk of a thousand streams. A thousand rocks replied to the voice of his dogs. His face was the mildness of youth.

His hand the death of heroes. One was his love, and fair was she! the daughter of mighty Conloch. She appeared like a sunbeam among women. And her hair was like the wing of the raven. Her dogs were taught to the chase. Her bow-string sounded on the winds of the forest. Her soul was fixed on Comal. Often met their eyes of love. Their course in the chase was one, and happy were their words in secret. But Gormal loved the maid, the dark chief of the gloomy Ardven. He watched her lone steps in the heath; the foe of unhappy Comal.

One day, tired of the chase, when the mist had concealed their friends, Comal and the daughter of Conloch met in the cave of Ronan. It was the wonted haunt of Comal. Its sides were hung with his arms. A hundred shields of thongs were there; a hundred helms of sounding steel.

"Rest here," he said, "my love Galvina; thou light of the cave of Ronan. A deer appears on Mora's brow. I go; but I will soon return." "I fear," she said, "dark Grumal my foe; he haunts the cave of Ronan. I will rest among the arms; but soon return, my love."

He went to the deer of Mora. The daughter of Conloch would try his love. She clothed her white sides with his armor, and strode from the cave of Ronan. He thought it was his foe. His heart beat high. His color changed, and darkness dimmed his eyes. He drew the bow. The arrow flew. Galvina fell in blood. He run with wildness in his steps and called the daughter of Conloch. No answer in the lonely rock. "Where art thou, O my love!" He saw at length her heaving heart beating around the feathered dart. "O Conloch's daughter, is it thou?" He sunk upon her breast.

The hunters found the hapless pair; he afterwards walked the hill. But many and silent were his steps round the dark dwelling of his love. The fleet of the ocean came. He fought; the strangers fled. He searched for his death over the field. But who could kill the mighty Comal! He threw away his dark-brown shield. An arrow found his manly breast. He sleeps with his loved Galvina at the noise of the sounding surge. Their green tombs are seen by the mariner, when he bounds on the waves of the north.

"The sailors bounding on the northern waves
With eager eyes their verdant tombs survey."
—SHACKLETON'S OSSIAN.

CHAPTER III.

The Song of Selma — Fingal in Battle — Death of Agandecca — Death of Calmar — Arrival of Fingal—Cuchullin Retires to a Cave— Fingal's Victory—Oscar's Bravery —Gaul, the Son of Morni.

"PLEASANT are the words of the song," said Cuchullin, "and lovely are the tales of other times. They are like the calm dew of the morning on the hill of roes, when the sun is faint on its side, and the lake is settled and blue in the vale. O Carril, raise again thy voice, and let me hear the song of Tura: which was sung in my halls of joy, when Fingal king of shields was there, and glowed at the deeds of his fathers."

"Fingal! thou man of battle," said Carril, "early were thy deeds in arms. Lochlin was consumed in thy wrath, when thy youth strove with the beauty of maids. They smiled at the fair-blooming face of the hero; but death was in his hands. He was strong as the waters of Lora. His followers were like the roar of a thousand streams. They took the king of Lochlin in battle, but restored him to his ships. His big heart swelled with pride, and the death of the youth was dark in his soul. For none ever, but Fingal, overcame the strength of the mighty Starno.[1]

[1] Starno was the father of Swaran as well as Agandecca. His fierce and cruel character is well marked in other poems concerning the times.

"He sat in the halls of his shells in Lochlin's woody land. He called the gray-haired Snivan, that often sung round the circle[1] of Loda: when the stone of power heard his cry, and the battle turned in the field of the valiant.

"'Go, gray-haired Snivan,' Starno said, 'go to Ardven's sea-surrounded rocks. Tell to Fingal, king of the desert—he that is the fairest among his thousands—tell him I give him my daughter, the loveliest maid that ever heaved a breast of snow. Her arms are white as the foam of my waves. Her soul as generous and mild. Let him come with his bravest heroes to the daughter of the secret hall.' Snivan came to Albion's windy hills, and fair-haired Fingal went. His kindled soul flew before him as he bounded on the waves of the north. 'Welcome,' said the dark-browed Starno, 'welcome, king of rocky Morven; and ye his heroes of might; sons of the lonely isle! Three days within my halls shall ye feast; and three days pursue my boars, that your fame may reach the maid that dwells in the secret hall.'

"The king of snow[2] designed their death, and gave the feast of shells. Fingal, who doubted the foe, kept on his arms of steel. The sons of death were afraid, and fled from the eyes of the hero. The voice of sprightly mirth arose. The trembling harps of joy are strung. Bards sing the battle of heroes, or the heaving breast of love. Ullin, Fingal's bard, was there; the sweet voice of the hill of Cona. He praised the daughter of snow, and Morven's[3] high-descended chief. The daughter of snow overheard, and left the hall of her secret sigh. She came in all her beauty, like the moon from the cloud of the east. Loveliness was around her as light. Her steps were like the music of songs. She saw the youth and loved him. He was the stolen sigh of her soul. Her blue eyes rolled on him in secret, and she blest the chief of Morven.

"The third day, with all its beams, shone bright on the

[1] This passage most certainly alludes to the religion of Lochlin, and the stone of power here mentioned is the image of one of the deities of Scandinavia.

[2] Starno is here poetically called the king of snow, from the great quantities of snow that fall in his dominions.

[3] All the northwest coast of Scotland probably went of old under the name of Morven, which signifies a ridge of very high hills.

wood of boars. Forth moved the dark-browed Starno; and Fingal, king of shields. Half the day they spent in the chase, and the spear of Fingal was red in the blood of Gormal. It was then the daughter of Starno, with blue eyes rolling in tears, came with her voice of love, and spoke to the king of Morven. 'Fingal, high-descended chief, trust not Starno's heart of pride. Within that wood he has placed his chiefs; beware of the wood of death. But, remember, son of the hill, remember Agandecca; save me from the wrath of my father, king of the windy Morven!'

"The youth, with unconcern, went on; his heroes by his side. The sons of death fell by his hand, and Gormal echoed around.

"Before the halls of Starno the sons of the chase convened. The king's dark brows were like clouds. His eyes like meteors of night. 'Bring hither,' he cries, 'Agandecca to her lovely king of Morven. His hand is stained with the blood of my people, and her words have not been in vain.'

"She came with the red eye of tears. She came with her loose raven locks. Her white breast heaved with sighs, like the foam of the streamy Lubar.

> "With eyes red rolling in her tears she came,
> With raven locks loose floating in the air."
> —SHACKLETON'S OSSIAN.

Starno pierced her side with steel. She fell like a wreath of snow that slides from the rocks of Ronan, when the woods are still, and the echo deepens in the vale. Then Fingal eyed his valiant chiefs, his valiant chiefs took arms. The gloom of the battle roared, and Lochlin fled or died. Pale, in his bounding ship he closed the maid of the raven hair. Her tomb ascends on Ardven, and the sea roars round the dark dwelling of Agandecca."

"Blessed be her soul," said Cuchullin, "and blessed be the mouth of the song. Strong was the youth of Fingal, and strong is his arm of age. Lochlin shall fall again before the king of echoing Morven. Show thy face from a cloud, O moon; light his white sails on the wave of the night. And if any strong spirit of heaven sits on that low-hung cloud, turn his dark ships from the rock, thou rider of the storm!"

Such were the words of Cuchullin at the sound of the mountain-stream, when Calmar ascended the hill, the wounded son of Matha. From the field he came in his blood. He leaned on his bending spear. Feeble is the arm of battle! but strong the soul of the hero!

"Welcome! O son of Matha," said Connal, "welcome art thou to thy friends! Why bursts that broken sigh from the breast of him that never feared before?"

"And never, Connal, will he fear, chief of the pointed steel. My soul brightens in danger, and exults in the noise of battle. I am of the race of steel; my fathers never feared.

"Cormar was the first of my race. He sported through the storms of the waves. His black skiff bounded on ocean, and travelled on the wings of the blast. A spirit once embroiled the night. Seas swell and rocks resound. Winds drive along the clouds. The lightning flies on wings of fire. He feared, and came to land; then blushed that he feared at all. He rushed again among the waves to find the son of the wind. Three youths guide the bounding bark; he stood with the sword unsheathed. When the low-hung vapor passed, he took it by the curling head, and searched its dark womb with his steel. The son of the wind forsook the air. The moon and stars returned.

"Such was the boldness of my race; and Calmar is like his fathers. Danger flies from the uplifted sword. They best succeed who dare.

"But now, ye sons of green-valleyed Erin, retire from Lena's bloody heath. Collect the sad remnant of our friends, and join the sword of Fingal. I heard the sound of Lochlin's advancing arms; but Calmar will remain and fight. My voice shall be such, my friends, as if thousands were behind me. But, son of Semo, remember me. Remember Calmar's lifeless corse. After Fingal has wasted the field, place me by some stone of remembrance, that future times may hear my fame, and the mother of Calmar rejoice over the stone of my renown."

"No: son of Matha," said Cuchullin, "I will never leave thee. My joy is in the unequal field: my soul increases in danger. Connal, and Carril of other times, carry off the sad sons of Erin; and when the battle is over, search for our pale corses in this narrow way. For near this oak we shall stand in

the stream of the battle of thousands. O Fithil's son, with feet of wind, fly over the heath of Lena. Tell to Fingal that Erin is inthralled, and bid the king of Morven hasten. O let him come like the sun in a storm, when he shines on the hills of grass."

Morning is gray on Cromla; the sons of the sea ascend. Calmar stood forth to meet them in the pride of his kindling soul. But pale was the face of the warrior; he leaned on his father's spear. That spear which he had brought from Lara's hall, when the soul of his mother was sad. But slowly now the hero falls, like a tree on the plains of Cona. Dark Cuchullin stands alone like a rock in a sandy vale. The sea comes with its waves, and roars on its hardened sides. Its head is covered with foam, and the hills are echoing around. Now from the gray mist of the ocean, the white-sailed ships of Fingal appear.

> "Now from the ocean, clad with azure grey,
> The white-sailed vessels of Fingal appear."
> —SHACKLETON'S OSSIAN.

High is the grove of their masts as they nod, by turns, on the rolling wave.

Swaran saw them from the hill, and returned from the sons of Erin. As ebbs the resounding sea through the hundred isles of Inistore, so loud, so vast, so immense returned the sons of Lochlin against the king of the desert hill. But bending, weeping, sad, and slow, and dragging his long spear behind, Cuchullin sunk in Cromla's wood, and mourned his fallen friends. He feared the face of Fingal, who was wont to greet him from the fields of renown.

"How many lie there of my heroes! the chiefs of Innisfail! they that were cheerful in the hall, when the sounds of the shells arose. No more shall I find their steps in the heath, or hear their voice in the chase of the hinds. Pale, silent, low on bloody beds are they who were my friends! O spirits of the lately dead, meet Cuchullin on his heath. Converse with him on the wind, when the rustling tree of Tura's cave resounds. There, far remote, I shall lie unknown. No bard shall hear of me. No gray stone shall rise to my renown. Mourn me with the dead, O Bragéla! departed is my fame."

Such were the words of Cuchullin, when he sunk in the woods of Cromla.

Fingal, tall in his ship, stretched his bright lance before him. Terrible was the gleam of the steel: it was like the green meteor of death, setting in the heath of Malmor, when the traveller is alone, and the broad moon is darkened in heaven.

"The battle is over," said the king, "and I behold the blood of my friends. Sad is the heath of Lena! and mournful the oaks of Cromla. The hunters have fallen there in their strength, and the son of Semo is no more. Ryno and Fillan, my sons, sound the horn of Fingal's war. Ascend that hill on the shore, and call the children of the foe. Call them from the grave of Lamdarg, the chief of other times. Be your voice like that of your father, when he enters the battles of his strength. I wait for the dark mighty man: I wait on Lena's shore for Swaran. And let him come with all his race; for strong in battle are the friends of the dead."

Fair Ryno flew like lightning; dark Fillan as the shade of autumn. On Lena's heath their voice is heard; the sons of ocean heard the horn of Fingal's war. As the roaring eddy of ocean returning from the kingdom of snows, so strong, so dark, so sudden came down the sons of Lochlin. The king in their front appears in the dismal pride of his arms. Wrath burns in his dark-brown face, and his eyes roll in the fire of his valor.

Fingal beheld the son of Starno, and he remembered Agandecca. For Swaran with the tears of youth had mourned his white-bosomed sister. He sent Ullin of the songs to bid him to the feast of shells. For pleasant on Fingal's soul returned the remembrance of the first of his loves.

Ullin came with aged steps, and spoke to Starno's son. "O thou that dwellest afar, surrounded, like a rock, with thy waves, come to the feast of the king, and pass the day in rest. To-morrow let us fight, O Swaran, and break the echoing shields."

"To-day," said Starno's wrathful son, "we break the echoing shields; to-morrow my feast will be spread, and Fingal lie on earth."

"And, to-morrow, let his feast be spread," said Fingal with a smile; "for, to-day, O my sons, we shall break the echoing shields. Ossian, stand thou near my arm. Gaul, lift thy terrible

sword. Fergus, bend thy crooked yew. Throw, Fillan, thy lance through heaven. Lift your shields like the darkened moon. Be your spears the meteors of death. Follow me in the path of my fame, and equal my deeds in battle."

As a hundred winds on Morven; as the streams of a hundred hills; as clouds fly successive over heaven; or, as the dark ocean assaults the shore of the desert: so roaring, so vast, so terrible the armies mixed on Lena's echoing heath.

> "In Mora's heath they slept: the surly blast
> Of dusky night loud whistling o'er them passed."
> —CAMERON'S OSSIAN.

The groan of the people spread over the hills; it was like the thunder of night, when the cloud bursts on Cona, and a thousand ghosts shriek at once on the hollow wind.

Fingal rushed on in his strength, terrible as the spirit of Trenmor, when, in a whirlwind, he comes to Morven to see the children of his pride. The oaks resound on their hills, and the rocks fall down before him. Bloody was the hand of my father when he whirled the lightning of his sword. He remembers the battles of his youth, and the field is wasted in his course.

Ryno went on like a pillar of fire. Dark is the brow of Gaul. Fergus rushed forward with feet of wind, and Fillan like the mist of the hill. Myself, like a rock, came down, I exulted in the strength of the king. Many were the deaths of my arm, and dismal was the gleam of my sword. My locks were not then so gray; nor trembled my hands of age. My eyes were not closed in darkness; nor failed my feet in the race.

Who can relate the deaths of the people, or the deeds of mighty heroes, when Fingal, burning in his wrath, consumed the sons of Lochlin? Groans swelled on groans, from hill to hill, till night had covered all. Pale, staring like a herd of deer, the sons of Lochlin convene on Lena.

We sat and heard the sprightly harp at Lubar's gentle stream. Fingal himself was next to the foe, and listened to the tales of bards. His godlike race were in the song, the chiefs of other times. Attentive, leaning on his shield, the king of Morven sat. The wind whistled through his aged locks, and his thoughts are of the days of other years. Near him, on his bending spear,

my young, my lovely Oscar stood. He admired the king of Morven, and his actions were swelling in his soul.

"Son of my son," begun the king, "O Oscar, pride of youth, I saw the shining of thy sword and gloried in my race. Pursue the glory of our fathers, and be what they have been; when Trenmor lived, the first of men, and Trathal the father of heroes. They fought the battle in their youth, and are the song of bards. O Oscar! bend the strong in arms, but spare the feeble hand. Be thou a stream of many tides against the foes of thy people, but like the gale that moves the grass to those who ask thine aid. So Trenmor lived; such Trathal was; and such has Fingal been. My arm was the support of the injured, and the weak rested behind the lightning of my steel.

"Oscar! I was young like thee, when lovely Fainafóllis came: that sunbeam! that mild light of love! the daughter of Craca's king! I then returned from Cona's heath, and few were in my train. A white-sailed boat appeared far off; we saw it like a mist that rode on ocean's blast. It soon approached; we saw the fair. Her white breast heaved with sighs. The wind was in her loose dark hair; her rosy cheek had tears. 'Daughter of beauty,' calm I said, 'what sigh is in that breast? Can I, young as I am, defend thee, daughter of the sea? My sword is not unmatched in war, but dauntless is my heart.'

"'To thee I fly,' with sighs she replied, 'O chief of mighty men! To thee I fly, chief of shells, supporter of the feeble hand! The king of Craca's echoing isle owned me the sunbeam of his race. And often did the hills of Cromla reply to the sighs of love for the unhappy Fainafóllis. Sora's chief beheld me fair, and loved the daughter of Craca. His sword is like a beam of light upon the warrior's side. But dark is his brow, and tempests are in his soul. I shun him on the rolling sea; but Sora's chief pursues.'

> "O king of shells! to thee, distressed, I fly;
> Renowned defender of the helpless maid,
> Now one in misery implores thy aid."
>
> —CAMERON'S OSSIAN.

"'Rest thou,' I said, 'behind my shield, rest in peace, thou beam of light! The gloomy chief of Sora will fly, if Fingal's arm is like his soul. In some lone cave I might conceal thee,

daughter of the sea! But Fingal never flies; for where the danger threatens, I rejoice in the storm of spears.' I saw the tears upon her cheek. I pitied Craca's fair.

"Now, like a dreadful wave afar, appeared the ship of stormy Borbar. His masts high-bended over the sea behind their sheets of snow. White roll the waters on either side. The strength of ocean sounds. 'Come thou,' I said, 'from the roar of ocean, thou rider of the storm. Partake the feast within my hall. It is the house of strangers.' The maid stood trembling by my side; he drew the bow: she fell. 'Unerring is thy hand,' I said, 'but feeble was the foe.' We fought, nor weak was the strife of death: He sunk beneath my sword. We laid them in two tombs of stones; the unhappy children of youth. Such have I been in my youth, O Oscar; be thou like the age of Fingal. Never seek the battle, nor shun it when it comes.

> "Such in my youth, O Oscar, have I been;
> And when in years resemble Fingal—
> The battle never seek, yet when it comes
> Maintain thy ground."
>
> —SHACKLETON'S OSSIAN.

"Fillan and Oscar of the dark-brown hair; ye children of the race; fly over the heath of roaring winds, and view the sons of Lochlin. Far off I hear the noise of their fear, like the storms of echoing Cona. Go; that they may not fly my sword along the waves of the north. For many chiefs of Erin's race lie here on the dark bed of death. The children of the storm are low; the sons of echoing Cromla."

The heroes flew like two dark clouds; two dark clouds that are the chariots of ghosts, when air's dark children come to frighten hapless men.

It was then that Gaul, the son of Morni, stood like a rock in the night. His spear is glittering to the stars; his voice like many streams. "Son of battle," cried the chief, "O Fingal, king of shells! let the bards of many songs soothe Erin's friends to rest. And, Fingal, sheathe thy sword of death, and let thy people fight. We wither away without our fame; for our king is the only breaker of shields. When morning rises on our hills, behold at a distance our deeds. Let Lochlin feel the sword of Morni's son, that bards may sing of me. Such was the custom

heretofore of Fingal's noble race. Such was thine own, thou king of swords, in battles of the spear."

"O son of Morni," Fingal replied, "I glory in thy fame. Fight; but my spear shall be near to aid thee in the midst of danger. Raise, raise the voice, sons of the song, and lull me into rest. Here will Fingal lie amidst the wind of night. And if thou, Agandecca, art near, among the children of thy land—if thou sittest on a blast of wind among the high-shrouded masts of Lochlin—come to my dreams, my fair one, and show thy bright face to my soul."

Many a voice and many a harp in tuneful sounds arose. Of Fingal's noble deeds they sung, and of the noble race of the hero.

"In greatest concert of symphonious sound
Then many a harp and many a sound arose."
—SHACKLETON'S OSSIAN.

And sometimes on the lovely sound was heard the name of the now mournful Ossian.

Often have I fought, and often won in battles of the spear. But blind, and tearful, and forlorn I now walk with little men. O Fingal, with thy race of battle I now behold thee not. The wild roes feed upon the green tomb of the mighty king of Morven. Blest be thy soul, thou king of swords, thou most renowned on the hills of Cona!

CHAPTER IV.

Fingal's Feast—The Song of Peace—Marriage of Trenmor with Inibaca — Grumal — The Hunting Party—Discovery of Cuchullin—His Departure for Scotland.

The clouds of night come rolling down, and rest on Cromla's dark-brown steep. The stars of the north arise over the rolling of the waves of Ullin; they show their heads of fire through the flying mist of heaven. A distant wind roars in the wood; but silent and dark is the plain of death.

Still on the darkening Lena arose in my ears the tuneful voice of Carril. He sung of the companions of our youth, and the days of former years; when we met on the banks of Lego, and sent round the joy of the shell. Cromla, with its cloudy steeps, answered to his voice. The ghosts of those he sung came in the rustling blasts. They were seen to bend with joy towards the sound of their praise.

Be thy soul blest, O Carril, in the midst of thy eddying winds. O that thou would come to my hall when I am alone by night! And thou dost come, my friend; I hear often thy light hand on my harp when it hangs on the distant wall, and the feeble sound touches my ear. Why dost thou not speak to me in my grief, and tell when I shall behold my friends? But thou passest

away in thy murmuring blast, and thy wind whistles through the gray hair of Ossian.

"Why will you not converse, and let me know
How long, detained in banishment below,
Among ignoble men, I here must pine
Before allowed my kindred souls to join?"
—CAMERON'S OSSIAN.

Now on the side of Mora the heroes gathered to the feast. A thousand aged oaks are burning to the wind. The strength[1] of the shells goes round. And the souls of warriors brighten with joy. But the king of Lochlin is silent, and sorrow reddens in the eyes of his pride. He often turned toward Lena and remembered that he fell.

Fingal leaned on the shield of his fathers. His gray locks slowly waved on the wind, and glittered to the beam of night. He saw the grief of Swaran, and spoke to the first of bards.

"Raise, Ullin, raise the song of peace, and soothe my soul after battle, that my ear may forget the noise of arms. And let a hundred harps be near to gladden the king of Lochlin. He must depart from us with joy.—None ever went sad from Fingal. Oscar! the lightning of my sword is against the strong in battle; but peaceful it lies by my side when warriors yield in war."

"Trenmor,"[2] said the mouth of the songs, "lived in the days of other years. He bounded over the waves of the north: companion of the storm. The high rocks of the land of Lochlin and its groves of murmuring sounds appeared to the hero through the mist; he bound his white-bosomed sails. Trenmor pursued the boar that roared along the woods of Gormal. Many had fled from its presence; but the spear of Trenmor slew it.

"Three chiefs, that beheld the deed, told of the mighty stranger. They told that he stood like a pillar of fire in the bright arms of his valor. The king of Lochlin prepared the feast, and called the blooming Trenmor. Three days he feasted at Gormal's windy towers, and got his choice in the combat.

[1] By the strength of the shell is meant the liquor the heroes drunk; of what kind it was, cannot be ascertained at this distance of time.

[2] Trenmor was great-grandfather to Fingal. The story is introduced to facilitate the dismission of Swaran.

"The land of Lochlin had no hero that yielded not to Trenmor. The shell of joy went round with songs in praise of the king of Morven; he that came over the waves, the first of mighty men.

"Now, when the fourth gray morn arose, the hero launched his ship, and walking along the silent shore waited for the rushing wind. For loud and distant he heard the blast murmuring in the grove.

"Covered over with arms of steel a son of the woody Gormal appeared. Red was his cheek and fair his hair. His skin like the snow of Morven. Mild rolled his blue and smiling eye when he spoke to the king of swords.

"'Stay, Trenmor, stay, thou first of men, thou hast not conquered Lonval's son. My sword has often met the brave. And the wise shun the strength of my bow.'

"'Thou fair-haired youth,' Trenmor replied, 'I will not fight with Lonval's son. Thine arm is feeble, sunbeam of beauty. Retire to Gormal's dark-brown hinds.'

> "Thou fair-haired youth, thy beauty proves thee young;
> Those snowy arms cannot in war be strong.
> Go, chase the dark-brown deer of Gormal's Hill
> And give thy vaunted arrows wings to kill."
>
> —CAMERON'S OSSIAN.

"'But I will retire,' replied the youth, 'with the sword of Trenmor, and exult in the sound of my fame. The virgins shall gather with smiles around him who conquered Trenmor. They shall sigh with the sighs of love, and admire the length of thy spear, when I shall carry it among thousands, and lift the glittering point to the sun.'

"'Thou shalt never carry my spear,' said the angry king of Morven. 'Thy mother shall find thee pale on the shore of the echoing Gormal; and, looking over the dark-blue deep, see the sails of him that slew her son.'

"'I will not lift the spear,' replied the youth, 'my arm is not strong with years. But with the feathered dart I have learned to pierce a distant foe. Throw down that heavy mail of steel; for Trenmor is covered all over. I first will lay my mail on earth. Throw now thy dart, thou king of Morven.'

"He saw the heaving of her breast. It was the sister of the king. She had seen him in the halls of Gormal, and loved his face of youth. The spear dropt from the hand of Trenmor! he bent his red cheek to the ground, for he had seen her like a beam of light that meets the sons of the cave, when they revisit the fields of the sun, and bend their aching eyes.

"'Chief of the windy Morven,' begun the maid of the arms of snow, 'let me rest in thy bounding ship, far from the love of Corla. For he, like the thunder of the desert, is terrible to Inibaca. He loves me in the gloom of his pride, and shakes ten thousand spears.'

"'Rest thou in peace,' said the mighty Trenmor, 'behind the shield of my fathers. I will not fly from the chief, though he shakes ten thousand spears.'

"Three days he waited on the shore; and sent his horn abroad. He called Corla to battle from all his echoing hills. But Corla came not to battle. The king of Lochlin descended. He feasted on the roaring shore; and gave the maid to Trenmor."

"King of Lochlin," said Fingal, "thy blood flows in the veins of thy foe. Our families met in battle, because they loved the strife of spears. But often did they feast in the hall; and send round the joy of the shell. Let thy face brighten with gladness, and thine ear delight in the harp. Dreadful as the storm of thine ocean thou hast poured thy valor forth; thy voice has been like the voice of thousands when they engage in battle. Raise, to-morrow, thy white sails to the wind, thou brother of Agandecca. Bright as the beam of noon she comes on my mournful soul. I saw thy tears for the fair one, and spared thee in the halls of Starno, when my sword was red with slaughter, and my eye full of tears for the maid. Or dost thou choose the fight? The combat which thy fathers gave to Trenmor is thine, that thou mayest depart renowned like the sun setting in the west."

"King of the race of Morven," said the chief of the waves of Lochlin, "never will Swaran fight with thee, first of a thousand heroes! I saw thee in the halls of Starno, and few were thy years beyond my own. When shall I, said I to my soul, lift the spear like the noble Fingal?

"I said to my soul at the time,
When shall I raise the sword with power
Like Fingal of the noble blows?"

—CLERK'S OSSIAN.

We have fought heretofore, O warrior, on the side of the shaggy Malmor; after my waves had carried me to thy halls, and the feast of a thousand shells was spread. Let the bards send his fame who overcame to future years, for noble was the strife of Malmor.

"But many of the ships of Lochlin have lost their youths on Lena. Take these, thou king of Morven, and be the friend of Swaran. And when thy sons shall come to the mossy towers of Gormal, the feast of shells shall be spread, and the combat offered on the vale."

"Nor ship," replied the king, "shall Fingal take, nor land of many hills. The desert is enough to me with all its deer and woods. Rise on thy waves again, thou noble friend of Agandecca. Spread thy white sails to the beam of the morning, and return to the echoing hills of Gormal."

"Blest be thy soul, thou king of shells," said Swaran of the dark-brown shield. "In peace thou art the gale of spring. In war the mountain-storm. Take now my hand in friendship, thou noble king of Morven. Let thy bards mourn those who fell. Let Erin give the sons of Lochlin to earth, and raise the mossy stones of their fame. That the children of the north hereafter may behold the place where their fathers fought. And some hunter may say, when he leans on a mossy tomb, here Fingal and Swaran fought, the heroes of other years. Thus hereafter shall he say, and our fame shall last forever!"

"Swaran," said the king of the hills, "to-day our fame is greatest. We shall pass away like a dream. No sound will be in the fields of our battles. Our tombs will be lost in the heath. The hunter shall not know the place of our rest. Our names may be heard in song, but the strength of our arms will cease. O Ossian, Carril, and Ullin, you know of heroes that are no more. Give us the song of other years. Let the night pass away on the sound, and morning return with joy."

"Ruler of the sea,
Life like a vision passes soon away.

To-day victorious, our full honors blow,
To-morrow death unplumes and lays us low."
—CAMERON'S OSSIAN.

We gave the song to the kings, and a hundred harps accompanied our voice. The face of Swaran brightened like the full moon of heaven, when the clouds vanish away, and leave her calm and broad in the midst of the sky.

It was then that Fingal spoke to Carril the chief of other times. "Where is the son of Semo; the king of the isle of mist? has he retired, like the meteor of death, to the dreary cave of Tura?"

"Cuchullin," said Carril of other times, "lies in the dreary cave of Tura. His hand is on the sword of his strength. His thoughts on the battle which he lost. Mournful is the king of spears; for he has often been victorious. He sends the sword of his war to rest on the side of Fingal. For, like the storm of the desert, thou hast scattered all his foes. Take, O Fingal, the sword of the hero; for his fame is departed like mist when it flies before the rustling wind of the vale."

"No," replied the king, "Fingal shall never take his sword. His arm is mighty in war; his fame shall never fail. Many have been overcome in battle, that have shone afterwards like the sun of heaven.

"O Swaran, king of the resounding woods, give all thy grief away. The vanquished, if brave, are renowned; they are like the sun in a cloud when he hides his face in the south, but looks again on the hills of grass.

"Grumal was a chief of Cona. He fought the battle on every coast. His soul rejoiced in blood; his ear in the din of arms. He poured his warriors on the sounding Craca, and Craca's king met him from his grove; for then within the circle of Brumo[1] he spoke to the stone of power.

"Fierce was the battle of the heroes, for the maid of the breast of snow. The fame of the daughter of Craca had reached Grumal at the streams of Cona; he vowed to have the white-bosomed maid, or die on the echoing Craca. Three days they strove together, and Grumal on the fourth was bound.

[1] This passage alludes to the religion of the king of Craca.

"Far from his friends they placed him in the horrid circle of Bruma; where often, they said, the ghosts of the dead howled round the stone of their fear. But afterwards he shone like a pillar of the light of heaven. They fell by his mighty hand, and Grumal had his fame.

"Raise, ye bards of other times, raise high the praise of heroes, that my soul may settle on their fame, and the mind of Swaran cease to be sad."

They lay in the heath of Mora; the dark winds rustled over the heroes. A hundred voices at once arose, a hundred harps were strung; they sung of other times, and the mighty chiefs of former years.

When now shall I hear the bard, or rejoice at the fame of my fathers? The harp is not strung on Morven, nor the voice of music raised on Cona. Dead with the mighty is the bard, and the fame is in the desert no more.

Morning trembles with the beam of the east, and glimmers on gray-headed Cromla. Over Lena is heard the horn of Swaran, and the sons of the ocean gather around. Silent and sad they mount the wave, and the blast of Ullin is behind their sails. White, as the mist of Morven, they float along the sea.

"Call," said Fingal, "call my dogs, the long bounding sons of the chase. Call white-breasted Bran; and the surly strength of Luäth. Fillan, and Ryno, but he is not here!

> "Let Ryno; but, alas! upon the heath
> He slumbers silent in the bed of death."
>
> —CAMERON'S OSSIAN.

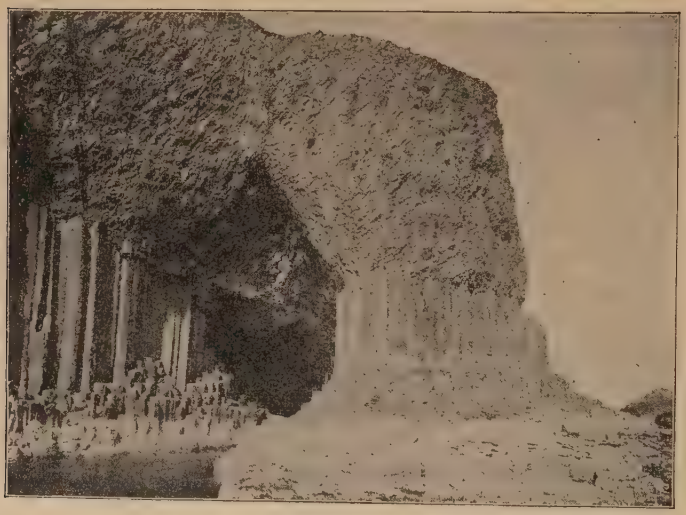
My son rests on the bed of death. Fillan and Fergus, blow my horn, that the joy of the chase may arise; that the deer of Cromla may hear and start at the lake of roes."

The shrill sound spreads along the wood. The sons of heathy Cromla arise. A thousand dogs fly off at once, gray-bounding through the heath. A deer fell by every dog, and three by the white-breasted Bran. He brought them, in their flight, to Fingal, that the joy of the king might be great.

One deer fell at the tomb of Ryno; and the grief of Fingal returned. He saw how peaceful lay the stone of him who was the first at the chase. "No more shalt thou rise, O my son, to

partake of the feast of Cromla. Soon will thy tomb be hid, and the grass grow rank on thy grave. The sons of the feeble shall pass over it, and shall not know that the mighty lie there.

"Ossian and Fillan, sons of my strength, and Gaul, king of the blue swords of war, let us ascend the hill to the cave of Tura, and find the chief of the battles of Erin. Are these the walls of Tura? gray and lonely they rise on the heath. The king of shells is sad, and the halls are desolate. Come, let us find the king of swords, and give him all our joy. But is that Cuchullin,



Fingal's Cave.

O Fillan, or a pillar of smoke on the heath? The wind of Cromla is on my eyes, and I distinguish not my friend."

"Fingal!" replied the youth, "it is the son of Semo. Gloomy and sad is the hero; his hand is on his sword. Hail to the son of battle, breaker of the shields!"

"Hail to thee," replied Cuchullin, "hail to all the sons of Morven. Delightful is thy presence, O Fingal; it is like the sun on Cromla, when the hunter mourns his absence for a season, and sees him between the clouds.

"Great Fingal, thy sight
Gives to my troubled soul unfeigned delight.

So joys the hunter when the sun returned
On Cromla."

—CAMERON'S OSSIAN.

Thy sons are like stars that attend thy course, and give light in the night. It is not thus thou hast seen me, O Fingal, returning from the wars of the desert; when the kings of the world had fled, and joy returned to the hill of hinds."

"Many are thy words, Cuchullin," said Connan of small renown. "Thy words are many, son of Semo, but where are thy deeds in arms? Why did we come over the ocean to aid thy feeble sword? Thou flyest to thy cave of sorrow, and Connan fights thy battles. Resign to me these arms of light; yield them, thou son of Erin."

"No hero," replied the chief, "ever fought the arms of Cuchullin; and had a thousand heroes fought them it were in vain, thou gloomy youth. I fled not to the cave of sorrow as long as Erin's warriors lived."

"Youth of the feeble arm," said Fingal, "Connan, say no more. Cuchullin is renowned in battle, and terrible over the desert. Often have I heard thy fame, thou stormy chief of Innisfail. Spread now thy white sails for the isle of mist, and see Bragéla leaning on her rock. Her tender eye is in tears, and the winds lift her long hair from her heaving breast. She listens to the winds of night to hear the voice of thy rowers;[1] to hear the song of the sea, and the sound of thy distant harp."

"And long shall she listen in vain; Cuchullin shall never return. How can I behold Bragéla, to raise the sigh of her breast? Fingal, I was always victorious in the battles of other spears!"

"And hereafter thou shalt be victorious," said Fingal king of shells. "The fame of Cuchullin shall grow like the branchy tree of Cromla. Many battles await thee, O chief, and many shall be the wounds of thy hand.

"Thou shalt still succeed
In future wars, and make the mighty bleed
Like Cromla's tree, far-shooting to the skies."

—CAMERON'S OSSIAN.

[1] The practice of singing when they row is universal among the inhabitants of the northwest coast of Scotland and the isles. It deceives time, and inspirits the rowers.

Bring hither, Oscar, the deer, and prepare the feast of shells; that our souls may rejoice after danger, and our friends delight in our presence."

We sat, we feasted, and we sung. The soul of Cuchullin rose. The strength of his arm returned, and gladness brightened on his face. Ullin gave the song, and Carril raised the voice. I often joined the bards, and sung of battles of the spear. Battles! where I often fought; but now I fight no more. The fame of my former actions is ceased; and I sit forlorn at the tombs of my friends.

Thus they passed the night in the song, and brought back the morning with joy. Fingal arose on the heath, and shook his glittering spear. He moved first toward the plains of Lena, and we followed like a ridge of fire. "Spread the sail," said the king of Morven, "and catch the winds that pour from Lena."

> "We straight obeyed,
> And to the whistling blast our sails displayed,
> Then sat and sung."
>
> —CAMERON'S OSSIAN.

We rose on the wave with songs, and rushed, with joy, through the foam of the sea.

CHAPTER V.

The Landing of Fingal—The Council of the Chiefs—Cairbar's Feast—Oscar, the Son of Ossian—Oscar Wounded — Fingal's Arrival on the Field—Mourning for Oscar—The Death of Cormac.

Tem'o-ra.[1]

THE blue waves of Ullin roll in light. The green hills are covered with day. Trees shake their dusky heads in the breeze. Gray torrents pour their noisy streams. Two green hills, with aged oaks, surround a narrow plain. The blue course of a stream is there ; on its banks stood Cairbar of Atha. His spear supports the king : the red eyes of his fear are sad. Cormac rises in his soul, with all his ghastly wounds. The gray form of the youth appears in darkness ; blood pours from his airy sides. Cairbar thrice threw his spear on earth, and thrice he stroked his beard. His steps are short ; he often stops, and tosses his sinewy arms. He is like a cloud in the desert, that varies its form to every blast : the valleys are sad around, and fear, by turns, the shower.

The king, at length, resumed his soul, and took his pointed spear.

> "At length the king his drooping soul resumed
> And took his pointed spear."
>
> —SHACKLETON'S OSSIAN.

[1] Temora was the name of a palace in Ulster. Cairbar had murdered Cormac and usurped the throne. Fingal the Caledonian king invaded Ireland to

He turned his eyes to Moi-lena. The scouts of blue ocean came. They came with steps of fear, and often looked behind. Cairbar knew that the mighty were near, and called his gloomy chiefs.

The sounding steps of his warriors came. They drew, at once, their swords. There Morlath stood with darkened face. Hidalla's long hair sighs in wind. Red-haired Cormar bends on his spear, and rolls his sidelong-looking eyes. Wild is the look of Malthos from beneath two shaggy brows. Foldath stands like an oozy rock, that covers its dark sides with foam. His spear is like Slimora's fir, that meets the wind of heaven. His shield is marked with the strokes of battle, and his red eye despises danger. These and a thousand other chiefs surrounded car-borne Cairbar, when the scout of ocean came. Mor-annal, from streamy Moi-lena. His eyes hang forward from his face, his lips are trembling, pale.

"Do the chiefs of Erin stand," he said, "silent as the grove of evening? Stand they, like a silent wood, and Fingal on the coast? Fingal, the terrible in battle, the king of streamy Morven."

"Hast thou seen the warrior?" said Cairbar with a sigh. "Are his heroes many on the coast? Lifts he the spear of battle? Or comes the king in peace?"

"In peace he comes not, Cairbar. I have seen his forward spear. It is a meteor of death; the blood of thousands is on its steel. He came first to the shore, strong in the gray hair of age. Full rose his sinewy limbs, as he strode in his might. That sword is by his side which gives no second[1] wound. His shield is terrible, like the bloody moon ascending through a storm.

"As wades the moon
Like blood ascending through the turbid storm,
Tremendous is his shield."

—SHACKLETON'S OSSIAN.

re-establish the rightful authority. The scene is laid near the hill of Mora in the North of Ireland.

[1] This was the famous sword of Fingal, made by Luno, a smith of Lochlin, and after him poetically called the son of Luno: it is said of this sword that it killed a man at every stroke, and that Fingal never used it but in times of the greatest danger.

Then came Ossian, king of songs; and Morni's son, the first of men. Connal leaps forward on his spear: Dermit spreads his dark-brown locks. Fillan bends his bow, the young hunter of streamy Moruth. But who is that before them, like the dreadful course of a stream? It is the son of Ossian, bright between his locks. His long hair falls on his back. His dark brows are half-inclosed in steel. His sword hangs loose on his side. His spear glitters as he moves. I fled from his terrible eyes, king of high Temora."

"Then fly, thou feeble man," said Foldath in gloomy wrath. "Fly to the gray streams of thy land, son of the little soul!

> "'Then fly,' said Foldath, fierce with gloomy wrath,
> 'Thou feeble man, son of the little soul;
> Fly to thy native land, where eddying moss
> The streaming waters grey.'"
>
> —SHACKLETON'S OSSIAN.

Have not I seen that Oscar? I beheld the chief in war. He is of the mighty in danger; but there are others who lift the spear. Erin has many sons as brave, king of Temora of Groves! Let Foldath meet him in the strength of his course, and stop this mighty stream. My spear is covered with the blood of the valiant; my shield is like the wall of Tura."

"Shall Foldath alone meet the foe?" replied the dark-brown Malthos. "Are they not numerous on our coast, like the waters of many streams? Are not these the chiefs who vanquished Swaran, when the sons of Erin fled? And shall Foldath meet their bravest heroes? Foldath of the heart of pride! take the strength of the people; and let Malthos come. My sword is red with slaughter, but who has heard my words?"

"Sons of green Erin," said Hidalla, "let not Fingal hear your words. The foe might rejoice, and his arm be strong in the land. Ye are brave, O warriors, and like the storms of the desert; they meet the rocks without fear, and overturn the woods. But let us move in our strength, flow as a gathered cloud. Then shall the mighty tremble; the spear shall fall from the hand of the valiant. We see the cloud of death, they will say, while shadows fly over their face. Fingal will mourn in his age, and see his flying fame. The steps of his chiefs will cease in Morven: the moss of years shall grow in Selma."

Cairbar heard their words, in silence, like the cloud of a shower: it stands dark on Cromla, till the lightning bursts its sides: the valley gleams with red light; the spirits of the storm rejoice. So stood the silent king of Temora; at length his words are heard.

"Spread the feast on Moi-lena: let my hundred bards attend. Thou, red-haired Olla, take the harp of the king. Go to Oscar, chief of swords, and bid him to our feast. To-day we feast and hear the song; to-morrow break the spears. Tell him that I have raised the tomb of Cathol; that bards have sung to his ghost. Tell him that Cairbar has heard his fame at the stream of resounding Carun. Cathmor is not here, Borbar-duthul's generous race. He is not here with his thousands, and our arms are weak. Cathmor is a foe to strife at the feast: his soul is bright as that sun. But Cairbar shall fight with Oscar, chiefs of the woody Temora! His words for Cathol were many; the wrath of Cairbar burns. He shall fall on Moi-lena: my fame shall rise in blood."

Their faces brightened round with joy. They spread over Moi-lena. The feast of shells is prepared. The songs of bards arise. We heard the voice of joy on the coast: we thought that mighty Cathmor came. Cathmor the friend of strangers! the brother of red-haired Cairbar. Their souls were not the same. The light of heaven was in the bosom of Cathmor. His towers rose on the banks of Atha: seven paths led to his halls. Seven chiefs stood on the paths, and called the stranger to the feast! But Cathmor dwelt in the wood to avoid the voice of praise.

Olla came with his songs. Oscar went to Cairbar's feast. Three hundred warriors strode along Moi-lena of the streams. The gray dogs bounded on the heath, their howling reached afar. Fingal saw the departing hero: the soul of the king was sad. He dreaded Cairbar's gloomy thoughts, amidst the feast of shells. My son raised high the spear of Cormac: an hundred bards met him with songs. Cairbar concealed with smiles the death that was dark in his soul. The feast is spread, the shells resound: joy brightens the face of the host. But it was like the parting beam of the sun, when he is to hide his red head in a storm.

Cairbar rose in his arms; darkness gathered on his brow. The hundred harps ceased at once.

> "Girt in his arms rose Cairbar; on his brow
> Thick darkness gathered, and at once were mute
> The hundred harps."—SHACKLETON'S OSSIAN.

The clang[1] of shields was heard. Far distant on the heath Olla raised his song of woe. My son knew the sign of death, and rising seized his spear. "Oscar!" said the dark-red Cairbar, "I behold the spear of Innisfail. The spear of Temora glitters in thy hand, son of woody Morven! It was the pride of an hundred kings, the death of heroes of old. Yield it, son of Ossian, yield it to car-borne Cairbar."

"Shall I yield," Oscar replied, "the gift of Erin's injured king: the gift of fair-haired Cormac, when Oscar scattered his foes! I came to Cormac's halls of joy, when Swaran fled from Fingal. Gladness rose in the face of youth: he gave the spear of Temora. Nor did he give it to the feeble, O Cairbar, neither to the weak in soul. The darkness of thy face is no storm to me; nor are thine eyes the flames of death. Do I fear thy clanging shield? Tremble I at Olla's song? No: Cairbar, frighten the feeble; Oscar is a rock."

"And wilt thou not yield the spear?" replied the rising pride of Cairbar. "Are thy words so mighty because Fingal is near? Fingal with aged locks from Morven's hundred groves! He has fought with little men. But he must vanish before Cairbar, like a thin pillar of mist before the winds of Atha."

"Were he who fought with little men near Atha's darkening chief: Atha's darkening chief would yield green Erin his rage. Speak not of the mighty, O Cairbar! but turn thy sword on me. Our strength is equal: but Fingal is renowned! the first of mortal men!"

Their people saw the darkening chiefs. Their crowding steps

[1] When a chief was determined to kill a person already in his power, it was usual to signify that his death was intended by the sound of a shield struck with the blunt end of a spear, at the same time that a bard at a distance raised the death-song. A ceremony of another kind was long used in Scotland upon such occasions. Everybody has heard that a bull's head was served up to Lord Douglas in the castle of Edinburgh, as a certain signal of his approaching death.

are heard around. Their eyes roll in fire. A thousand swords are half unsheathed. Red-haired Olla raised the song of battle: the trembling joy of Oscar's soul arose: the wonted joy of his soul when Fingal's horn was heard. Dark as the swelling wave of ocean before the rising winds, when it bends its head near a coast, came on the host of Cairbar.

Daughter of Toscar![1] why that tear? He is not fallen yet. Many were the deaths of his arm before my hero fell!

Behold they fall before my son like the groves in the desert, when an angry ghost rushes through night, and takes their green heads in his hand! Morlath falls: Maronnan dies: Conachar trembles in his blood. Cairbar shrinks before Oscar's sword, and creeps in darkness behind his stone. He lifted the spear in secret, and pierced my Oscar's side. He falls forward on his shield: his knees sustain the chief. But still his spear is in his hand. See gloomy Cairbar falls! The steel pierced his forehead, and divided his red hair behind. He lay, like a shattered rock, which Cromla shakes from its shaggy side. But never more shall Oscar rise! he leans on his bossy shield. His spear is in his terrible hand: Erin's sons stood distant and dark. Their shouts arose, like crowded streams; Moi-lena echoed wide. Fingal heard the sound, and took his father's spear. His steps are before us on the heath. He spoke the words of woe.

"I hear the noise of war. Young Oscar is alone. Rise, sons of Morven; join the hero's sword."

Ossian rushed along the heath. Fillan bounded over Moi-lena. Fingal strode in his strength, and the light of his shield is terrible. The sons of Erin saw it far distant; they trembled in their souls. They knew that the wrath of the king arose, and they foresaw their death. We first arrived; we fought; and Erin's chiefs withstood our rage. But when the king came, in the sound of his course, what heart of steel could stand! Erin fled over Moi-lena. Death pursued their flight. We saw Oscar on his shield. We saw his blood around. Silence darkened every face. Each turned his back and wept. The king strove to hide his tears. His gray beard whistled in the wind. He bent his head above his son. His words were mixed with sighs.

[1] Malvina, the daughter of Toscar, to whom he addresses that part of the poem which relates to the death of Oscar her lover.

"And art thou fallen, Oscar, in the midst of thy course? the heart of the aged beats over thee! He sees thy coming wars. The wars which ought to come he sees, but they are cut off from thy fame. When shall joy dwell at Selma? When shall grief depart from Morven? My sons fall by degrees: Fingal shall be the last of his race. The fame which I have received shall pass away: my age will be without friends. I shall sit a gray cloud in my hall: nor shall I hear the return of a son, in the midst of his sounding arms. Weep, ye heroes of Morven! never more shall Oscar rise!"

And they did weep, O Fingal; dear was the hero to their souls. He went out to battle, and the foes vanished; he returned, in peace, amidst their joy. No father mourned his son slain in youth; no brother his brother of love. They fell, without tears, for the chief of the people was low! Bran[1] is howling at his feet: gloomy Luäth is sad, for he had often led them to the chase; to the bounding roe of the desert.

"The very dogs bewail his death
In common with his friends."
—Old Version.

When Oscar saw his friends around, his breast arose with sighs. "The groans" he said, "of aged chiefs; the howling of my dogs; the sudden bursts of songs of grief, have melted Oscar's soul. My soul, that never melted before; it was like the steel of my sword. Ossian, carry me to my hills! Raise the stones of my renown. Place the horn of the deer and my sword within my narrow dwelling. The torrent hereafter may raise the earth: the hunter may find the steel and say, 'This has been Oscar's sword.'

"And fallest thou, son of my fame! And shall I never see thee, Oscar! When others hear of their sons, I shall not hear of thee. The moss is on thy four gray stones; the mournful wind is there. The battle shall be fought without him: he shall not pursue the dark-brown hinds. When the warrior returns from battles, and tells of other lands, 'I have seen a tomb,' he will say, 'by the roaring stream, the dark dwelling of a chief. He fell by car-borne Oscar, the first of mortal men.' I, per-

[1] Bran was one of Fingal's dogs. Bran signifies a mountain-stream.

haps, shall hear his voice; and a beam of joy will rise in my soul."

"And shall I, Oscar, never see thee more?
When others hear in raptures of their sons,
I shall not hear of thee."

—SHACKLETON'S OSSIAN.

The night would have descended in sorrow, and morning returned in the shadow of grief: our chiefs would have stood like cold dropping rocks on Moi-lena, and have forgot the war, did not the king disperse his grief, and raise his mighty voice. The chiefs, as new-awakened from dreams, lift up their heads around.

"How long on Moi-lena shall we weep; or pour our tears in Ullin? The mighty will not return. Oscar shall not rise in his strength. The valiant must fall one day, and be no more known on his hills. Where are our fathers, O warriors! the chiefs of the times of old? They have set like stars that have shone, we only hear the sound of their praise. But they were renowned in their day, the terror of other times. Thus shall we pass, O warriors, in the day of our fall. Then let us be renowned when we may; and leave our fame behind us, like the last beams of the sun, when he hides his red head in the west. Ullin, my aged bard! take the ship of the king. Carry Oscar to Selma of harps. Let the daughters of Morven weep. We shall fight in Erin for the race of fallen Cormac. The days of my years begin to fail: I feel the weakness of my arm. My fathers bend from their clouds, to receive their gray-haired son. But, before I go hence, one beam of fame shall rise: so shall my days end, as my years begun, in fame: my life shall be one stream of light to bards of other times."

Ullin raised his white sails: the wind of the south came forth. He bounded on the waves towards Selma. I remained in my grief, but my words were not heard. The feast is spread on Moi-lena: an hundred heroes reared the tomb of Cairbar: but no song is raised over the chief, for his soul has been dark and bloody. The bards remembered the fall of Cormac! what could they say in Cairbar's praise?

The night came rolling down. The light of an hundred oaks arose. Fingal sat beneath a tree. Old Althan stood in the

midst. He told the tale of fallen Cormac. Althan the son of Conachar, the friend of car-borne Cuchullin: he dwelt with Cormac in windy Temora, when Semo's son fought with generous Torlath. The tale of Althan was mournful, and the tear was in his eye.

"The night came rolling down, the gleaming light
Rose from a hundred oaks—Beneath a tree
Sat Morven's chief."

—SHACKLETON'S OSSIAN.

"The setting sun was yellow on Dora. Gray evening began to descend. Temora's woods shook with the blast of the unconstant wind. A cloud, at length, gathered in the west, and a red star looked from behind its edge. I stood in the wood alone, and saw a ghost on the darkening air. His stride extended from hill to hill: his shield was dim on his side. It was the son of Semo: I knew the warrior's face. But he passed away in his blast, and all was dark around. My soul was sad. I went to the hall of shells. A thousand lights arose: the hundred bards had strung the harp. Cormac stood in the midst, like the morning star, when it rejoices on the eastern hill, and its young beams are bathed in showers. The sword of Artho was in the hand of the king, and he looked with joy on its polished studs: thrice he strove to draw it, and thrice he failed; his yellow locks are spread on his shoulders: his cheeks of youth are red. I mourned over the beam of youth, for he was soon to set.

"'Althan!' he said, with a smile, 'hast thou beheld my father? Heavy is the sword of the king, surely his arm was strong. O that I were like him in battle, when the rage of his wrath arose! then would I have met, like Cuchullin, the car-borne son of Cantéla! But years may come on, O Althan! and my arm be strong. Hast thou heard of Semo's son, the chief of high Temora? He might have returned with his fame; for he promised to return to-night. My bards wait him with songs; my feast is spread in Temora.'

"I heard the king in silence. My tears began to flow. I hid them with my aged locks; but he perceived my grief. 'Son of Conachar!' he said, "is the king of Tura[1] low? Why

[1] Cuchullin is called the king of Tura, from a castle of that name on the coast of Ulster.

bursts thy sigh in secret? And why descends the tear? Comes the car-borne Torlath? Or the sound of the red-haired Cairbar? They come! for I behold thy grief. Mossy Tura's king is low! Shall I not rush to battle? But I cannot lift the spear! O had mine arm the strength of Cuchullin, soon would Cairbar fly; the fame of my fathers would be renewed; and the deeds of other times!'

"He took his bow. The tears flow down, from both his sparkling eyes. Grief saddens round: the bards bend forward, from their hundred harps. The lone blast touched their trembling strings. The sound[1] is sad and low.

"Their trembling strings the blast
Lone blowing touched, the sound is sad and low."
—SHACKLETON'S OSSIAN.

A voice is heard at a distance, as of one in grief. It was Carril of other times, who came from dark Slimora. He told of the death of Cuchullin, and of his mighty deeds. The people were scattered round his tomb: their arms lay on the ground. They had forgot the war, for he, their fire, was seen no more.

"'But who,' said the soft-voiced Carril, 'come like the bounding roes? Their stature is like the young trees of the plain, growing in a shower: Soft and ruddy are their cheeks; but fearless souls look forth from their eyes. Who but the sons of Usnoth, the car-borne chiefs of Etha. The people rise on every side, like the strength of an half-extinguished fire, when the winds come, sudden, from the desert, on their rustling wings. The sound of Caithbat's[2] shield was heard. The heroes saw Cuchullin in Nathos. So rolled his sparkling eyes: his steps were such on the heath. Battles are fought at Lego: the sword of Nathos prevails. Soon shalt thou behold him in thy halls, king of Temora of Groves.'

"'And soon may I behold the chief!' replied the blue-eyed king. 'But my soul is sad for Cuchullin; his voice was pleasant in mine ear. Often have we moved, on Dora, to the chase

[1] The prophetic sound, mentioned in other poems, which the harps of the bards emitted before the death of a person worthy and renowned. It is here an omen of the death of Cormac, which, soon after, followed.

[2] Caithbat was grandfather to Cuchullin; and his shield was made use of to alarm his posterity to the battles of the family.

of the dark-brown hinds: his bow was unerring on the mountains. He spoke of mighty men. He told of the deeds of my fathers; and I felt my joy. But sit thou at the feast, O bard, I have often heard thy voice. Sing in the praise of Cuchullin, and of that mighty stranger.'

"'Day rose on woody Temora, with all the beams of the east. Trathin came to the hall, the son of old Gellâma. 'I behold,' he said, 'a dark cloud in the desert, king of Innisfail! a cloud it seemed at first, but now a crowd of men. One strides before them in his strength; his red hair flies in wind. His shield glitters to the beam of the east. His spear is in his hand.'

"'Call him to the feast of Temora,' replied the king of Erin. 'My hall is the house of strangers, son of the generous Gellâma! Perhaps it is the chief of Etha, coming in the sound of his renown. Hail, mighty stranger, art thou of the friends of Cormac? But Carril, he is dark, and unlovely; and he draws his sword. Is that the son of Usnoth, bard of the times of old?'

"'It is not the son of Usnoth!' said Carril, 'but the chief of Atha. Why comest thou in thy arms to Temora, chief of the gloomy brow? Let not thy sword rise against Cormac! Whither dost thou turn thy speed?' He passed on in darkness, and seized the hand of the king. Cormac foresaw his death, and the rage of his eyes arose. 'Retire, thou gloomy chief of Atha: Nathos comes with battle. Thou art bold in Cormac's hall, for his arm is weak.' The sword entered the side of the king: he fell in the halls of his fathers. His fair hair is in the dust. His blood is smoking round.

"'And art thou fallen in thy halls, O son of noble Artho? The shield of Cuchullin was not near. Nor the spear of thy father. Mournful are the mountains of Erin, for the chief of the people is low! Blest be thy soul, O Cormac! thou art darkened in thy youth.'

> "My blessings rest, O Cormac, on thy soul,
> For in thy youth has darkness o'er thee past."
> —SHACKLETON'S OSSIAN.

"His words came to the ears of Cairbar, and he closed us in the midst of darkness. He feared to stretch his sword to the

bards[1] though his soul was dark. Long had we pined alone : at length, the noble Cathmor came. He heard our voice from the cave ; he turned the eye of his wrath on Cairbar.

"'Chief of Atha!' he said, 'how long wilt thou pain my soul? Thy heart is like the rock of the desert, and thy thoughts are dark. But thou art the brother of Cathmor, and he will fight thy battles. But Cathmor's soul is not like thine, thou feeble hand of war! The light of my bosom is stained with thy deeds: the bards will not sing of my renown. They may say, "Cathmor was brave, but he fought for gloomy Cairbar." They will pass over my tomb in silence: my fame shall not be heard. Cairbar! loose the bards: they are the sons of other times. Their voice shall be heard in other years, after the kings of Temora have failed. We came forth at the words of the chief. We saw him in his strength. He was like thy youth, O Fingal, when thou first didst lift the spear. His face was like the plain of the sun when it is bright: no darkness travelled over his brow. But he came with his thousands to Ullin ; to aid the red-haired Cairbar: and now he comes to revenge his death, O king of woody Morven.'

"And let him come," replied the king ; "I love a foe like Cathmor. His soul is great ; his arm is strong, his battles are full of fame. But the little soul is a vapor that hovers round the marshy lake: it never rises on the green hill, lest the winds should meet it there: its dwelling is in the cave, it sends forth the dart of death. Our young heroes, O warriors, are like the renown of our fathers. They fight in youth ; they fall: their names are in the song. Fingal is amidst his darkening years. He must not fall, as an aged oak, across a secret stream. Near it are the steps of the hunter, as it lies beneath the wind. How has that tree fallen? He, whistling, strides along.

"Raise the song of joy, ye bards of Morven, that our souls may forget the past. The red stars look on us from the clouds, and silently descend.

> "That our sad souls may forget the past,
> Ye bards of Morven raise the song of joy,
> Down from the clouds on us red look the stars."
>
> —SHACKLETON'S OSSIAN.

[1] The persons of the bards were so sacred, that even he, who had just murdered his sovereign, feared to kill them.

Soon shall the gray beam of the morning rise, and show us the foes of Cormac. Fillan! take the spear of the king; go to Mora's dark-brown side. Let thine eyes travel over the heath, like flames of fire. Observe the foes of Fingal, and the course of generous Cathmor. I hear a distant sound, like the falling of rocks in the desert. But strike thou thy shield, at times, that they may not come through night, and the fame of Morven cease. I begin to be alone, my son, and I dread the fall of my renown."

The voice of the bards arose. The king leaned on the shield of Trenmor. Sleep descended on his eyes; his future battles rose in his dreams. The host are sleeping around. Dark-haired Fillan observed the foe. His steps are on a distant hill: we hear, at times, his clanging shield.

> "Whilst on a lonely distant heath he treads,
> We hear at times the clangor of his shield."
> —SHACKLETON'S OSSIAN.

CHAPTER VI.

Lament for Malvina—Fingal's Voyage to Lochlin—He Touches at Berrathon—Friendship of Larthmor —Uthal—Nina-thoma—Her Imprisonment— Ossian and Toscar Defeat Uthal—Nina-thoma Released—Her Death— Ossian Foretells His Death.

Ber-rath'on.

Bend thy blue course, O stream, round the narrow plain of Lutha.[1] Let the green woods hang over it from their mountains: and the sun look on it at noon. The thistle is there on its rock, and shakes its beard to the wind. The flower hangs its heavy head, waving, at times, to the gale. "Why dost thou awake me, O gale," it seems to say; "I am covered with the drops of heaven. The time of my fading is near, and the blast that shall scatter my leaves. To-morrow shall the traveller come, he that saw me in my beauty shall come; his eyes will search the field, but they will not find me! So shall they search in vain for the voice of Cona, after it has failed in the field. The hunter shall come forth in the morning, and the voice of my harp shall not be heard. "Where is the son of car-borne Fingal?" The tear will be on his cheek. Then come thou, O

[1] Lutha, swift stream.

Malvina, with all thy music, come; lay Ossian in the plain of Lutha: let his tomb rise in the lovely field.

Malvina! where art thou with thy songs: with the soft sound of thy steps? Son[1] of Alpin, art thou near? where is the daughter of Toscar? "I passed, O son of Fingal, by Tarlutha's mossy walls. The smoke of the hall was ceased: silence was among the trees of the hill. The voice of the chase was over. I saw the daughters of the bow. I asked about Malvina, but they answered not. They turned their faces away: thin darkness covered their beauty. They were like stars, on a rainy hill, by night, each looking faintly through her mist."

Pleasant be thy rest, O lovely beam! soon hast thou set on our hills! The steps of thy departure were stately, like the moon on the blue, trembling wave. But thou hast left us in darkness, first of the maids of Lutha! We sit, at the rock, and there is no voice; no light but the meteor of fire! Soon hast thou set, Malvina, daughter of generous Toscar! But thou risest like the beam of the east, among the spirits of thy friends, where they sit in their stormy halls, the chambers of the thunder. A cloud hovers over Cona: its blue curling sides are high. The winds are beneath it, with their wings; within it is the dwelling of Fingal. There the hero sits in darkness; his airy spear is in his hand. His shield, half covered with clouds, is like the darkened moon; when one half still remains in the wave, and the other looks sickly on the field.

His friends sit around the king, on mist, and hear the songs of Ullin: he strikes the half-viewless harp, and raises the feeble voice.

> "Seated on mist his friends are round the king,
> And hear the aged Ullin of the song,
> The soft, half-viewless harp, he gently strikes,
> And raises the weak voice."
>
> —Davidson's Ossian.

The lesser heroes, with a thousand meteors, light the airy hall. Malvina rises, in the midst; a blush is on her cheek.

[1] Tradition has not handed down the name of this son of Alpin. His father was one of Fingal's principal bards, and he appears himself to have had a poetical genius.

She beholds the unknown faces of her fathers, and turns aside her humid eyes. "Art thou come so soon," said Fingal, "daughter of generous Toscar? Sadness dwells in the halls of Lutha. My aged son is sad. I hear the breeze of Cona, that was wont to lift thy heavy locks. It comes to the hall, but thou art not there; its voice is mournful among the arms of thy fathers. Go with thy rustling wing, O breeze! and sigh on Malvina's tomb. It rises yonder beneath the rock, at the blue stream of Lutha. The maids[1] are departed to their place, and thou alone, O breeze, mourneth there."

But who comes from the dusky west, supported on a cloud? A smile is on his gray, watery face; his locks of mist fly on the wind: he bends forward on his airy spear; it is thy father, Malvina! "Why shinest thou, so soon, on our clouds," he says, "O lovely light of Lutha? But thou wert sad, my daughter, for thy friends were passed away. The sons of little men were in the hall, and none remained of the heroes, but Ossian, king of spears."

And dost thou remember Ossian, car-borne Toscar, son of Conloch? The battles of our youth were many; our swords went together to the field. They saw us coming like two falling rocks, and the sons of the stranger fled. "There come the warriors of Cona," they said; "their steps are in the paths of the vanquished." Draw near, son of Alpin, to the song of the aged. The actions of other times are in my soul: my memory beams on the days that are past. On the days of the mighty Toscar, when our path was in the deep. Draw near, son of Alpin, to the last sound of the voice of Cona.

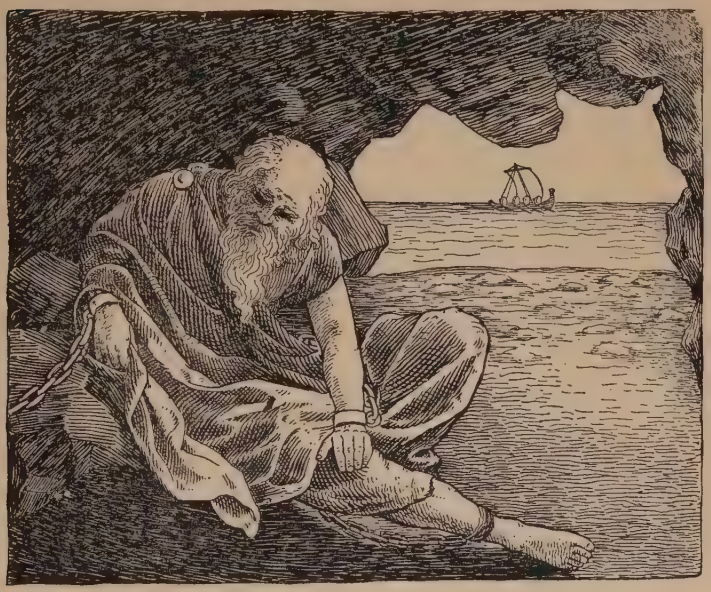
The king of Morven commanded, and I raised my sails to the wind. Toscar, chief of Lutha, stood at my side as I rose on the dark-blue wave. Our course was to sea-surrounded Berrathon, the isle of many storms. There dwelt, with his locks of age, the stately strength of Larthmor. Larthmor who spread the feast of shells to Comhal's mighty son, when he went to Starno's halls, in the days of Agandecca. But when the chief was old, the pride of his son arose, the pride of fair-haired Uthal, the love of a thousand maids. He bound the aged Larthmor, and dwelt in his sounding halls.

[1] That is, the young virgins who sung the funeral elegy over her tomb.

Long pined the king in his cave, beside his rolling sea.

> "The king long pined in his lonely cave
> Beside the rolling of the troubled sea."
> —DAVIDSON'S OSSIAN.

Morning did not come to his dwelling; nor the burning oak by night. But the wind of ocean was there, and the parting beam of the moon. The red star looked on the king, when it trembled



King Larthmor in his Cave.

on the western wave. Snitho came to Selma's hall: Snitho, companion of Larthmor's youth. He told of the king of Berrathon: the wrath of Fingal rose. Thrice he assumed the spear, resolved to stretch his hand to Uthal. But the memory of his actions rose before the king, and he sent his son and Toscar. Our joy was great on the rolling sea, and we often half unsheathed our swords. For never before had we fought alone, in the battles of the spear.

Night came down on the ocean; the winds departed on their

wings. Cold and pale is the moon. The red stars lift their heads. Our course is slow along the coast of Berrathon; the white waves tumble on the rocks. "What voice is that," said Toscar, "which comes between the sounds of the waves? It is soft but mournful, like the voice of departed bards. But I behold the maid,[1] she sits on the rock alone. Her head bends on her arm of snow: her dark hair is in the wind. Hear, son of Fingal, her song, it is smooth as the gliding waters of Lavath." We came to the silent bay, and heard the maid of night.

"How long will ye roll around me, blue-tumbling waters of ocean? My dwelling was not always in caves, nor beneath the whistling tree. The feast was spread in Torthóma's hall; my father delighted in my voice. The youths beheld me in the steps of my loveliness, and they blessed the dark-haired Nina-thoma. It was then thou didst come, O Uthal! like the sun of heaven. The souls of the virgins are thine, son of generous Larthmor! But why dost thou leave me alone in the midst of roaring waters? Was my soul dark with thy death? Did my white hand lift the sword! Why then hast thou left me alone, king of high Finthormo?"[2]

The tear started from my eye when I heard the voice of the maid. I stood before her in my arms and spoke the words of peace. "Lovely dweller of the cave, what sigh is in that breast? Shall Ossian lift his sword in thy presence, the destruction of thy foes? Daughter of Torthóma, rise, I have heard the words of thy grief. The race of Morven are around thee, who never injured the weak. Come to our dark-bosomed ship, thou brighter than that setting moon. Our course is to the rocky Berrathon, to the echoing walls of Finthormo." She came in her beauty, she came with all her lovely steps. Silent joy brightened in her face, as when the shadows fly from the field of spring; the blue stream is rolling in brightness, and the green bush bends over its course.

The morning rose with its beams. We came to Rothma's bay. A boar rushed from the wood; my spear pierced his side.

[1] Nina-thoma, the daughter of Torthóma, who had been confined to a desert island by her lover Uthal.

[2] Finthormo, the palace of Uthal.

I rejoiced over the blood,[1] and foresaw my growing fame. But now the sound of Uthal's train came from the high Finthormo; they spread over the heath to the chase of the boar. Himself comes slowly on, in the pride of his strength. He lifts two pointed spears. On his side is the hero's sword. Three youths carry his polished bows: the bounding of five dogs is before him. His warriors move on, at a distance, admiring the steps of the king. Stately was the son of Larthmor! but his soul was dark. Dark as the troubled face of the moon, when it foretells the storms.

We rose on the heath before the king; he stopped in the midst of his course. His warriors gathered around, and a gray-haired bard advanced. "Whence are the sons of the strangers?" begun the bard. "The children of the unhappy come to Berrathon; to the sword of car-borne Uthal. He spreads no feast in his hall: the blood of strangers is on his streams. If from Selma's walls ye come, from the mossy walls of Fingal, choose three youths to go to your king to tell of the fall of his people. Perhaps the hero may come and pour his blood on Uthal's sword; so shall the fame of Finthormo arise, like the growing tree of the vale."

"Never will it rise, O bard," I said in the pride of my wrath. "He would shrink in the presence of Fingal, whose eyes are the flames of death. The son of Comhal comes, and the kings vanish in his presence; they are rolled together, like mist, by the breath of his rage. Shall three tell to Fingal that his people fell? Yes! they may tell it, bard, but his people shall fall with fame."

I stood in the darkness of my strength: Toscar drew his sword at my side. The foe came on like a stream: the mingled sound of death arose. Man took man, shield met shield; steel mixed its beams with steel. Darts hiss through air; spears ring on mails; and swords on broken bucklers bound. As the noise of an aged grove beneath the roaring wind, when a thousand ghosts break the trees by night, such was the din of arms. But Uthal fell beneath my sword, and the sons of Berrathon fled. It was then I saw him in his beauty, and the tear hung in

[1] Ossian thought that his killing the boar, on his first landing in Berrathon, was a good omen of his future success in that island.

my eye. "Thou art fallen,[1] young tree," I said, "with all thy beauty round thee. Thou art fallen on thy plains, and the field is bare. The winds come from the desert, and there is no sound in thy leaves! Lovely art thou in death, son of car-borne Larthmor."

Nina-thoma sat on the shore, and heard the sound of battle.

> "Nina-thoma sat on the rocky shore
> And heard the sound of battle on the heath."
> —DAVIDSON'S OSSIAN.

She turned her red eyes on Lethmal the gray-haired bard of Selma, for he had remained on the coast, with the daughter of Torthóma. "Son of the times of old!" she said, "I hear the noise of death. Thy friends have met with Uthal, and the chief is low! O that I had remained on the rock, inclosed with the tumbling waves! Then would my soul be sad, but his death would not reach my ear. Art thou fallen on thy heath, O son of high Finthormo? thou didst leave me on a rock, but my soul was full of thee. Son of high Finthormo! art thou fallen on thy heath?"

She rose pale in her tears, and saw the bloody shield of Uthal; she saw it in Ossian's hand; her steps were distracted on the heath. She flew; she found him; she fell. Her soul came forth in a sigh. Her hair is spread on his face. My bursting tears descend. A tomb arose on the unhappy, and my song was heard. "Rest, hapless children of youth! at the noise of that mossy stream. The virgins will see your tomb, at the chase, and turn away their weeping eyes. Your fame will be in the song; the voice of the harp will be heard in your praise. The daughters of Selma shall hear it, and your renown shall be in other lands. Rest, children of youth, at the noise of the mossy stream."

Two days we remained on the coast. The heroes of Berrathon convened. We brought Larthmor to his halls; the feast of shells was spread. The joy of the aged was great; he looked to the arms of his fathers; the arms which he left in his hall, when the pride of Uthal arose. We were renowned before Larthmor,

[1] To mourn over the fall of their enemies was a practice universal among Ossian's heroes.

and he blessed the chiefs of Morven; but he knew not that his son was low, the stately strength of Uthal. They had told, that he had retired to the woods, with the tears of grief; they had told it, but he was silent in the tomb of Rothma's heath.

On the fourth day we raised our sails to the roar of the northern wind. Larthmor came to the coast, and his bards raised the song. The joy of the king was great; he looked to Rothma's gloomy heath; he saw the tomb of his son, and the memory of Uthal rose. "Who of my heroes," he said, "lies there? He seems to have been of the kings of spears? Was he renowned in my halls, before the pride of Uthal rose? Ye are silent, sons of Berrathon! is the king of heroes low? My heart melts for thee, O Uthal! though thy hand was against thy father! O that I had remained in the cave! that my son had dwelt in Finthormo! I might have heard the tread of his feet, when he went to the chase of the boar. I might have heard his voice on the blast of my cave. Then would my soul be glad: but now darkness dwells in my halls."

Such were my deeds, son of Alpin, when the arm of my youth was strong; such were the actions of Toscar, the car-borne son of Conloch. But Toscar is on his flying cloud, and I am alone at Lutha: my voice is like the last sound of the wind, when it forsakes the woods.

> "But I am alone, and Toscar rides upon
> The clouds. My voice is like the echo
> Of a dying storm."
>
> —Old Version.

But Ossian shall not be long alone; he sees the mist that shall receive his ghost. He beholds the mist that shall form his robe when he appears on his hills. The sons of little men shall behold me, and admire the stature of the chiefs of old. They shall creep to their caves, and look to the sky with fear; for my steps shall be in the clouds, and darkness shall roll on my side.

Lead, son of Alpin, lead the aged to his woods. The winds begin to rise. The dark wave of the lake resounds. Bends there not a tree from Mora with its branches bare? It bends, son of Alpin, in the rustling blast. My harp hangs on a blasted branch. The sound of its strings is mournful. Does the wind touch thee, O harp, or is it some passing ghost? It is the hand of Malvina!

but bring me the harp, son of Alpin; another song shall rise. My soul shall depart in the sound; my fathers shall hear it in their airy hall. Their dim faces shall hang, with joy, from their clouds, and their hands receive their son. The aged oak bends over the stream. It sighs with all its moss. The withered fern whistles near, and mixes, as it waves, with Ossian's hair.

Strike the harp and raise the song: be near, with all your wings, ye winds.

> "Strike the well-tuned harp
> And raise the song; be near with all your wings
> Ye warring tempest."
>
> —DAVIDSON'S OSSIAN.

Bear the mournful sound away to Fingal's airy hall. Bear it to Fingal's hall, that he may hear the voice of his son; the voice of him that praised the mighty.

The blast of the north opens thy gates, O king, and I behold thee sitting on mist, dimly gleaming in all thine arms. Thy form now is not the terror of the valiant, but like a watery cloud when we see the stars behind it with their weeping eyes. Thy shield is like the aged moon: thy sword a vapor half-kindled with fire. Dim and feeble is the chief, who travelled in brightness before. But thy steps are on the winds of the desert, and the storm darkens in thy hand. Thou takest the sun in thy wrath, and hidest him in thy clouds. The sons of little men are afraid, and a thousand showers descend. But when thou cometh forth in thy mildness, the gale of the morning is near thy course. The sun laughs in his blue fields, and the gray stream winds in its valley. The bushes shake their green heads in the wind. The roes bound towards the desert.

But there is a murmur in the heath! the stormy winds abate! I hear the voice of Fingal. Long has it been absent from mine ear! "Come, Ossian, come away," he says: "Fingal has received his fame. We passed away like flames that had shone for a season; our departure was in renown. Though the plains of our battles are dark and silent, our fame is in the four gray stones. The voice of Ossian has been heard, and the harp was strung in Selma. Come Ossian, come away," he says, "and fly with thy fathers on clouds."

And come I will, thou king of men! the life of Ossian fails.

I begin to vanish on Cona, and my steps are not seen in Selma. Beside the stone of Mora I shall fall asleep. The winds whistling in my gray hair shall not waken me. Depart on thy wings, O wind: thou canst not disturb the rest of the bard. The night is long, but his eyes are heavy; depart, thou rustling blast.

But why art thou sad, son of Fingal? Why grows the cloud of thy soul? The chiefs of other times are departed; they have gone without their fame. The sons of future years shall pass away, and another race arise. The people are like the waves of ocean; like the leaves of woody Morven, they pass away in the rustling blast, and other leaves lift their green heads. Did thy beauty last, O Ryno?[1] Stood the strength of car-borne Oscar? Fingal himself passed away, and the halls of his fathers forgot his steps. And shalt thou remain, aged bard! when the mighty have failed? But my fame shall remain, and grow like the oak of Morven, which lifts its broad head to the storm and rejoices in the course of the wind.

> "Like the tall oak is Morven's woody plain
> Which its broad head lifts to the warring winds
> And boldly meets the course of the storm."
>
> —DAVIDSON'S OSSIAN.

[1] Ryno, the son of Fingal, who was killed in Ireland in the war against Swaran, was remarkable for the beauty of his person, his swiftness and great exploits. Minvane, the daughter of Morni, and sister to Gaul, was in love with Ryno.

CHAPTER VII.

Aideen's Grave—The Celts.

According to one of the many traditions, Oscar, the grandson of Fingal, was slain in battle near Tura, in Ulster. He was buried on the field, a place now designated as the Hill of Howth. Aideen, his wife, died from grief and was buried by his side amid great demonstrations of grief. A modern poet has perpetuated the legend in the following elegy on

AIDEEN'S GRAVE.

They heaved the stones; they heaped the cairn.
Said Ossian, "In a queenly grave
We leave her, 'mong her fields of fern
Between the cliff and wave."

The cliff behind stands clear and bare,
And bare, above, the heathery steep
Scales the clear heaven's expanse, to where
The Danaan Druids sleep.

And all the sands that, left and right,
The grassy isthmus-ridge confine,
In yellow bars lie bare and bright
Among the sparkling brine.

A clear pure air pervades the scene,
In loneliness and awe secure,
Meet spot to sepulchre a Queen,
Who in her life was pure.

Here far from camp and chase removed,
Apart in Nature's quiet room,
The music that alive she loved
Shall cheer her in the tomb.

The humming of the noontide bees,
The lark's loud carol all day long,
And, borne on evening's salted breeze,
The clanking sea-birds' song.

But when the wintry frosts begin,
And in their long-drawn, lofty flight
The wild geese with their airy din
Distend the ear of night;

And when the fierce De Danaan ghosts,
At midnight when their peaks come down,
When all around the enchanted coasts
Despairing strangers drown;

When mingling with the wreckful wail
From low Clontarf's wave-trampled floor,
Comes booming up the burthened gale
The angry Sand Bull's roar;

Or angrier than the sea, the shout
Of Erin's hosts in wrath combined
When Terror heads Oppression's rout
And Freedom cheers behind:—

Then o'er our lady's placid dream,
When safe from storms she sleeps, may steal
Such joy as may not misbeseem
A queen of men to feel.

Such thrill of free, defiant pride,
As rapt her in her battle car
At Gavra, when by Oscar's side
She rode the ridge of war.

Exulting, down the shouting troops,
And through the thick confronting kings,
With hands on all their javelin loops
And shafts on all their strings;

E'er closed the inseparable crowds
No more to part for me, and show,
As bursts the sun through scattering clouds
My Oscar issuing so.

No more, dispelling battle's gloom,
Shall son to me from fight return ;
The great green rath's ten-acred tomb
Lies heavy on his urn.

A cup of bodkin-pencilled clay
Holds Oscar ; mighty heart and limb
One handful now of ashes grey :
And she has died for him.

And here, hard by her natal bower
On lone Ben-Edar's side we strive
With lifted rock and sign of power
To keep her name alive.

That, while from circling year to year,
Her Ogham-lettered stone is seen,
The Gael shall say, "Our Fenians here
Entombed their loved Aideen.

The Ogham from her pillar stone
In tract of time will wear away ;
Her name at last be only known
In Ossian's echoed lay.

The long-forgotten lay I sing
May only ages hence revive,
(As eagle with a wounded wing
To soar again might strive.)

Imperfect, in an alien speech,
When, wandering here, some child of chance
Through pangs of keen delight shall reach
The gift of utterance,—

To speak the air, the sky to speak,
The freshness of the hill to tell,
When, roaming bare Ben-Edar's peak
And Aideen's briary dell,

And gazing on the Cromlech vast,
And on the mountain and the sea,
Shall catch communion with the past
And mix himself with me.

Child of the Future's doubtful night,
Whate'er your speech, whoe'er your sires,
Sing while you may with frank delight
The song your hour inspires.

Sing while you may, nor grieve to know
The song you sing shall also die ;
Atharna's lay has perished so,
Though once it thrilled the sky.

Above us, from his rocky chair
There, where Ben-Edar's landward crest
O'er eastern Bregia bends, to where
Dun-Almon crowns the west.

What change shall o'er the scene have cross'd
What conquering lords anew have come ;
What lore-armed, mightier Druid host
From Gaul or distant Rome !

What arts of death, what ways of life,
What creeds unknown to bard or seer,
Shall round your careless steps be rife,
Who pause and ponder here :

And, haply, where yon curlew calls
Athwart the marsh, 'mid groves and bowers,
See rise some mighty chieftain's halls
With unimagined towers :

And baying hounds and coursers bright,
And burnish't cars of dazzling sheen,
With courtly train of dame and knight,
Where now the fern is green.

Or by yon prostrate altar stone
May kneel, perchance, and free from blame,
Hear holy men with rites unknown
New names of God proclaim.

Let change as may the name of Awe,
Let right surcease and altar fall,
The same one God remains, a law
Forever and for all.

Let change as may the face of earth,
Let alter all the social frame,
For mortal men the ways of birth
And death are still the same.

And still, as life and time wear on,
The children of the waning days
(Though strength be from their shoulders gone
To lift the loads we raise)

Shall weep to do the burial rites
Of lost one's loved; and fondly found
In shadow of the gathering nights
The monumental mound.

Farewell, the strength of man is worn;
The night approaches dark and chill;
Sleep till, perchance, an endless morn
Descends the glittering hill"—

Of Oscar and Aideen bereft
So Ossian sang. The Fenians sped
Three mighty shouts to heaven; and left
Ben-Edar to the dead.

Sir Samuel Ferguson.

The Celtic influence, as such, has long since been absorbed into the general name of Anglo-Saxon; still the fountain of Celtic literature has by no means run dry. A current deep and strong continues to hold its own independent way across the earth. The following poem illustrates the pride with which the descendants of ancient Britain recall the achievements of a former age and people. It is an echo of those far-off times, when a sturdy race fought and ruled in their own rough and sturdy world.

THE CELTS.

Long, long ago, beyond the misty space
Of twice a thousand years,
In Erin old there dwelt a mighty race
Taller than Roman spears;
Like oaks and towers, they had a giant grace,
Were fleet as deers:
With winds and waves they made their biding-place,
The Western shepherd seers.

Their ocean-god was *Mananan Mac Lir*,
Whose angry lips
In their white foam full often would inter
Whole fleets of ships:
Crom was their day-god, and their thunderer
Made morning and eclipse:
Bride was their queen of song, and unto her
They pray'd with fire-touch'd lips.

Great were their acts, their passions and their sports;
With clay and stone
They piled on strath and shore those mystic forts,
Not yet undone;
On cairn-crown'd hills they held their council courts;
While youths—alone—
With giant-dogs, explored the elks' resorts,
And brought them down.

Of these was *Finn*, the father of the bard
Whose ancient song
Over the clamor of all change is heard,
Sweet-voiced and strong.
Finn once o'ertook Granu, the golden-hair'd,
The fleet and young:
From her, the lovely, and from him, the feared,
The primal poet sprung—

Ossian!—two thousand years of mist and change
Surround thy name;
Thy Finnian heroes now no longer range
The hills of Fame.
The very names of Finn and Gael sound strange;
Yet thine the same
By miscall'd lake and desecrated grange
Remains, and shall remain!

The Druid's altar and the Druid's creed
We scarce can trace;
There is not left an undisputed deed
Of all your race—
Save your majestic Song, which hath their speed,
And strength and grace:
In that sole song they live, and love, and bleed—
It bears them on through space.

Inspirèd giant, shall we e'er behold,
In our own time,
One fit to speak your spirit on the wold,
Or seize your rhyme?
One pupil of the past, as mighty-soul'd
As in the prime
Were the fond, fair, and beautiful, and bold—
They of your song sublime?

Thomas D'Arcy McGee.

CHAPTER VIII.

Tal-ies'in (Tal-yes'-in).

Gwyddno Garanhir was sovereign of Gwaelod, a territory bordering on the sea. And he possessed a weir upon the strand between Dyvi and Aberystwyth, near to his own castle, and the value of an hundred pounds was taken in that weir every May eve. And Gwyddno had an only son named Elphin, the most hapless of youths, and the most needy. And it grieved his father sore, for he thought that he was born in an evil hour. By the advice of his council, his father had granted him the drawing of the weir that year, to see if good luck would ever befall him, and to give him something wherewith to begin the world. And this was on the twenty-ninth of April.

The next day, when Elphin went to look, there was nothing in the weir but a leathern bag upon a pole of the weir. Then said the weir-ward unto Elphin, "All thy ill-luck aforetime was nothing to this; and now thou hast destroyed the virtues of the weir, which always yielded the value of an hundred pounds every May eve; and to-night there is nothing but this leathern skin within it." "How now," said Elphin, "there may be therein the value of a hundred pounds." Well! they took up the leathern bag, and he who opened it saw the forehead of an infant, the fairest that ever was seen; and he said, "Behold a radiant brow!" (in the Welsh language, taliesin). "Taliesin be he called," said Elphin. And he lifted the bag in his arms, and, lamenting his bad luck, placed the boy sorrowfully behind him.

And he made his horse amble gently, that before had been trotting, and he carried him as softly as if he had been sitting in the easiest chair in the world. And presently the boy made a Consolation, and praise to Elphin ; and the Consolation was as you may here see.

"Fair Elphin, cease to lament!
Never in Gwyddno's weir
Was there such good luck as this night.
Being sad will not avail ;
Better to trust in God than to forebode ill ;
Weak and small as I am,
On the foaming beach of the ocean,
In the day of trouble I shall be
Of more service to thee than three hundred salmon."

This was the first poem that Taliesin ever sung, being to console Elphin in his grief for that the produce of the weir was lost, and what was worse, that all the world would consider that it was through his fault and ill-luck. Then Elphin asked him what he was, whether man or spirit. And he sung thus :

"I have been formed a comely person ;
Although I am but little, I am highly gifted ;
Into a dark leathern bag I was thrown,
And on a boundless sea I was sent adrift.
From seas and from mountains
God brings wealth to the fortunate man."

Then came Elphin to the house of Gwyddno, his father, and Taliesin with him. Gwyddno asked him if he had had a good haul at the weir, and he told him that he had got that which was better than fish. "What was that?" said Gwyddno, "A bard," said Elpin. Then said Gwyddno, "Alas! what will he profit thee?" And Taliesin himself replied and said, "He will profit him more than the weir ever profited thee." Asked Gwyddno, "Art thou able to speak, and thou so little?" And Taliesin answered him, "I am better able to speak than thou to question me." "Let me hear what thou canst say," quoth Gwyddno. Then Taliesin sang :

"Three times have I been born, I know by meditation ;
All the sciences of the world are collected in my breast,
For I know what has been, and what hereafter will occur."

Elphin gave his haul to his wife, and she nursed him tenderly and lovingly. Thenceforward Elphin increased in riches more and more, day after day, and in love and favor with the king; and there abode Taliesin until he was thirteen years old, when Elphin, son of Gwyddno, went by a Christmas invitation to his uncle, Maelgan Gwynedd, who held open court at Christmas-tide in the castle of Dyganwy, for all the number of his lords of both degrees, both spiritual and temporal, with a vast and thronged host of knights and squires. And one arose and said, "Is there in the whole world a king so great as Maelgan, or one on whom Heaven has bestowed so many gifts as upon him;—form, and beauty, and meekness, and strength, besides all the powers of the soul?" And together with these they said that Heaven had given one gift that exceeded all the others, which was the beauty, and grace, and wisdom, and modesty of his queen, whose virtues surpassed those of all the ladies and noble maidens throughout the whole kingdom. And with this they put questions one to another. Who had braver men? Who had fairer or swifter horses or greyhounds? Who had more skilful or wiser bards than Maelgan?

When they had all made an end of their praising the king and his gifts, it befell that Elphin spoke in this wise: "Of a truth, none but a king may vie with a king; but were he not a king, I would say that my wife was as virtuous as any lady in the kingdom, and also that I have a bard who is more skilful than all the king's bards." In a short space some of his fellows told the king all the boastings of Elphin; and the king ordered him to be thrown into a strong prison, until he might show the truth as to the virtues of his wife, and the wisdom of his bard.

Now when Elphin had been put in a tower of the castle, with a thick chain about his feet (it is said that it was a silver chain, because he was of royal blood), the king, as the story relates, sent his son Rhun to inquire into the demeanor of Elphin's wife. Now Rhun was the most graceless man in the world, and there was neither wife nor maiden with whom he held converse, but was evil spoken of. While Rhun went in haste towards Elphin's dwelling, being fully minded to bring disgrace upon his wife, Taliesin told his mistress how that the king had placed his master in durance in prison, and how that Rhun was coming in haste

to strive to bring disgrace upon her. Wherefore he caused his mistress to array one of the maids of her kitchen in her apparel; which the noble lady gladly did, and she loaded her hands with the best rings that she and her husband possessed.

In this guise Taliesin caused his mistress to put the maiden to sit at the board in her room at supper; and he made her to seem as her mistress, and the mistress to seem as the maid. And when they were in due time seated at their supper, in the manner that has been said, Rhun suddenly arrived at Elphin's dwelling, and was received with joy, for the servants knew him; and they brought him to the room of their mistress, in the semblance of whom the maid rose up from supper and welcomed him gladly. And afterwards she sat down to supper again, and Rhun with her. Then Rhun began jesting with the maid, who still kept the semblance of her mistress. And verily this story shows that the maiden became so intoxicated that she fell asleep; and the story relates that it was a powder that Rhun put into the drink that made her sleep so soundly that she never felt it when he cut off from her hand her little finger, whereon was the signet ring of Elphin, which he had sent to his wife as a token a short time before. And Rhun returned to the king with the finger and the ring as a proof, to show that he had cut it off from her hand without her awaking from her sleep of intemperance.

> "I, Taliesin, chief of bards,
> With a sapient Druid's words,
> Will set kind Elphin free."—TRIAD.

The king rejoiced greatly at these tidings, and he sent for his councillors, to whom he told the whole story from the beginning. And he caused Elphin to be brought out of prison, and he chided him because of his boast. And he spake on this wise: "Elphin, be it known to thee beyond a doubt, that it is but folly for a man to trust in the virtues of his wife further than he can see her; and that thou mayst be certain of thy wife's vileness, behold her finger, with thy signet ring upon it, which was cut from her hand last night, while she slept the sleep of intoxication." Then thus spake Elphin: "With thy leave, mighty king, I cannot deny my ring, for it is known of many; but verily I assert that the finger around which it is was never

attached to the hand of my wife; for in truth and certainty there are three notable things pertaining to it, none of which ever belonged to any of my wife's fingers. The first of the three is, that it is certainly known to me that this ring would never remain upon her thumb, whereas you can plainly see that it is hard to draw it over the joint of the little finger of the hand whence this was cut. The second thing is, that my wife has never let pass one Saturday since I have known her without paring her nails before going to bed, and you can see fully that the nail of this little finger has not been pared for a month. The third is, truly, that the hand whence this finger came was kneading rye dough within three days before the finger was cut therefrom, and I can assure your highness that my wife has never kneaded rye dough since my wife she has been."

The king was mightily wroth with Elphin for so stoutly withstanding him, respecting the goodness of his wife; wherefore he ordered him to his prison a second time, saying that he should not be loosed thence until he had proved the truth of his boast, as well concerning the wisdom of his bard as the virtues of his wife.

In the mean time his wife and Taliesin remained joyful at Elphin's dwelling. And Taliesin showed his mistress how that Elphin was in prison because of them; but he bade her be glad, for that he would go to Maelgan's court to free his master. So he took leave of his mistress, and came to the court of Maelgan, who was going to sit in his hall, and dine in his royal state, as it was the custom in those days for kings and princes to do at every chief feast. As soon as Taliesin entered the hall, he placed himself in a quiet corner, near the place where the bards and the minstrels were wont to come, in doing their service and duty to the king, as is the custom at the high festivals, when the bounty is proclaimed. So, when the bards and the heralds came to cry largess, and to proclaim the power of the king, and his strength, at the moment when they passed by the corner wherein he was crouching, Taliesin pouted out his lips after them, and played "Blerwm, blerwm!" with his finger upon his lips. Neither took they much notice of him as they went by, but proceeded forward till they came before the king, unto whom they made their obeisance with their bodies, as they were wont, with-

out speaking a single word, but pouting out their lips, and making mouths at the king, playing "Blerwm, blerwm!" upon their lips with their fingers, as they had seen the boy do. This sight caused the king to wonder, and to deem within himself that they were drunk with many liquors. Wherefore he commanded one of his lords, who served at the board, to go to them and desire them to collect their wits, and to consider where they stood, and what it was fitting for them to do. And this lord did so gladly. But they ceased not from their folly any more than before. Whereupon he sent to them a second time, and a third, desiring them to go forth from the hall. At the last the king ordered one of his squires to give a blow to the chief of them, named Heinin Vardd; and the squire took a broom and struck him on the head, so that he fell back in his seat. Then he arose, and went on his knees, and besought leave of the king's grace to show that this their fault was not through want of knowledge, neither through drunkenness, but by the influence of some spirit that was in the hall. And he spoke on this wise: "O honorable king, be it known to your grace that not from the strength of drink, or of too much liquor, are we dumb, but through the influence of a spirit that sits in the corner yonder, in the form of a child." Forthwith the king commanded the squire to fetch him; and he went to the nook where Taliesin sat, and brought him before the king, who asked him what he was, and whence he came. And he answered the king in verse:

"Primary chief bard am I to Elphin,
And my native country is the region of the summer stars;
I have been in Asia with Noah in the ark,
I have seen the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah,
I was in India when Rome was built,
I have now come here to the remnant of Troia."

When the king and his nobles had heard the song, they wondered much, for they had never heard the like from a boy so young as he. And when the king knew that he was the bard of Elphin, he bade Heinin, his first and wisest bard, to answer Taliesin, and to strive with him. But when he came, he could do no other than play "Blerwm!" on his lips; and when he sent for the others of the four and twenty bards, they all did

likewise, and could do no other. And Maelgan asked the boy Taliesin what was his errand, and he answered him in song:

"Elphin, the son of Gwyddno,
Is in the land of Artro,
Secured by thirteen locks,
For praising his instructor.
Therefore I, Taliesin,
Chief of the bards of the west,
Will loosen Elphin
Out of a golden fetter."

Then he sang to them a riddle:

"Discover thou what is
The strong creature from before the flood,
Without flesh, without bone,
Without vein, without blood,
Without head, without feet;
It will neither be older nor younger
Than at the beginning.
Behold how the sea whitens
When first it comes,
When it comes from the south,
When it strikes on coasts.
It is in the field, it is in the wood,
But the eye cannot perceive it.
One Being has prepared it,
By a tremendous blast,
To wreak vengeance
On Maelgan Gwynedd."

While he was thus singing his verse, there arose a mighty storm of wind, so that the king and all his nobles thought that the castle would fall upon their heads. And the king caused them to fetch Elphin in haste from his dungeon, and placed him before Taliesin. And it is said that he immediately sung a verse, so that the chains opened from about his feet.

After that Taliesin brought Elphin's wife before them, and showed that she had not one finger wanting. And in this manner did he set his master free from prison, and protect the innocence of his mistress, and silence the bards so that not one of them dared to say a word. The early bards were regarded as the prophets of the people. They not only possessed the gift

of song, but also a knowledge of the past and future. When Taliesin was asked to describe the creation of man, he said:

"The Almighty made,
Down the Hebron vale,
With his plastic hands,
Adam's fair form.

"And five hundred years
There he remained, and lay,
Void of any help,
Without a soul."

The legends and folk-lore of a people are in some respects their truest history. They represent not so much what has been as the desires and aspirations of the national heart. King Arthur and his knights are an ideal court. The principles of Christianity, that centuries after culminated into doctrine and dogma, were theirs in their undeveloped and chaotic form. A sense of justice underlies their every action. Their lives, although a strange medley of the ideal, the impossible and the real, in the end became the dream of the seer and the song of the poet. Song is the language of immortality. The pen of history may become rusty and refuse to write, but harpstrings are not easily broken.

"Yet the same harp that Taliesin strung
Delights the sons whose sires the chords delighted;
Still the old music of the mountain tongue
Tells of a race not conquered but united;
That, losing nought, wins all the Saxon won,
And shares the realm where never sets the sun."—BULWER.

Thus Taliesin sang the songs of every land, and then returned to his own fair country, and predicted the supremacy of the Anglo-Saxon race:

"Britains then shall have
Their lands and their crown,
And the stranger swarms
Shall disappear."

This has been literally fulfilled. The alien races long since retreated before the Anglo-Saxon, and Britain not only has her own, but many other lands. King Arthur has become a legend, and his knightly court lingers as a historic shadow, but the laws and manners of those days are still in force.

Courtesy to woman, the abhorrence of a lie, and a readiness to defend the weak, are still characteristic of the English race. In this way the Age of Chivalry has perpetuated itself.

> "Such times have been not since the light that lead
> The holy Elders with the gift of myrrh ;
> But now the whole Round Table is dissolved,
> Which was an image of the mighty world."
>
> —THE PASSING OF ARTHUR.

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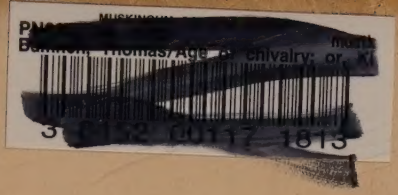

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